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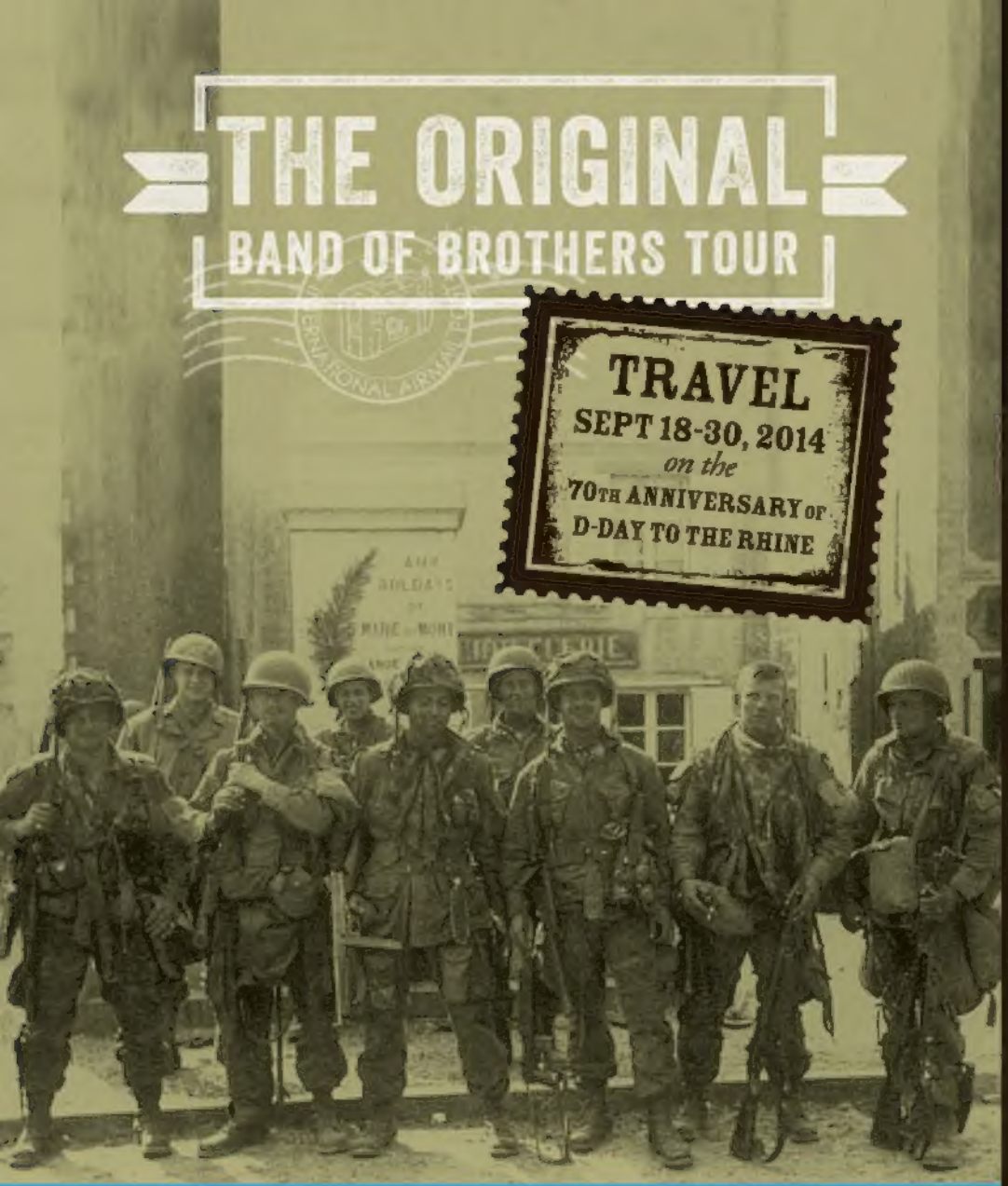

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REMEMBERING D-DAY

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COVER SHOT: *Inside a US Coast Guard-manned Higgins boat from USS* Samuel Chase, *1st Infantry Division GIs crouch for safety, their rifles protected from water by plastic bags. It is June 6, 1944—D-Day for the Normandy Invasion. In the left bow, an officer studies Omaha beach. On the right, the coast guard bowman stands ready to lower the ramp. The dark spot off the starboard bow is a swimming DD Sherman tank.* **US Coast Guard Photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Robert F. Sargent. National Archives**

THIS SPREAD: *GIs in full combat gear crowd into a Higgins boat for the charge toward their assigned landing beach. They have just climbed into the boat from an offshore LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry).* **US Coast Guard Photo. National Archives**

REMEMBERING
D-DAY
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The Devil and the Deep Green Sea

General Dwight Eisenhower was beside himself—almost literally.

One part of him could visualize the June 1944 invasion of Adolf Hitler's Fortress Europe going much as planned, and with good reason. "Planned" was an understatement. The invasion had been talked about, organized, and practiced in one way or another since 1942, and especially since January 1944, when Ike arrived in England as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force.

Besides, Ike and his expeditionary force had other invasions under their belts, amphibious assaults in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy that had featured advance aerial and naval bombing, parachute and glider infantry, and troop landings—all the elements needed for Normandy. The Allies had learned important lessons, and had held their own against Hitler's finest.

But Eisenhower was a realist, and another part of him could picture failure in vivid, wretched detail. He could imagine an amphibious assault gone horribly wrong—dashed by churlish North Atlantic weather, picked apart by the wall of Axis firepower waiting in France. History's mightiest invasion would wash up on a French beach like driftwood, along with the hopes of the free world and the bodies of countless sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers.

These two parts of Eisenhower existed side by side as he approached the hardest decision of his life: go or wait? The decision wasn't going to make itself. No idyllic stretch of fair weather and favorable tides was on the horizon. The best Ike's meteorologists could offer was a narrow window of invasion-friendly weather on June 6, with acceptable tides.

Waiting for better weather meant losing favorable tides. And waiting for the return of good tides brought a risk of its own: losing the element of surprise. The longer Eisenhower waited, the likelier the Germans were to figure out what was coming and where it would hit. That would enable them to gather their military resources and throw the Allies into the sea.

Ike was truly between the devil and the deep green English Channel. But weighing all the options, he made what he believed was the right decision, and set June 6 as D-Day for the Normandy Invasion.

Immediately Eisenhower swung into action, visiting his troops to exhort them, inspire them, and bolster their confidence. Before setting out on the invasion, every Allied serviceman received a copy of Ike's "Great Crusade" message, with its encouraging words and its war cry, "We will accept nothing less than full Victory!" *(On the facing page, you can read a copy received by 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper Sergeant Sylvester "Bones" Barbu of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.)*

Another, very different message came from Eisenhower's pen (pencil, actually) on the eve of the "Great Crusade." Reading it, you can sense the terrible, life-crushing weight of the decision Ike had just made, a decision in which he now had to show utmost confidence. The scrawled note, absentmindedly dated July 5, reads:

Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available.

The troops, the air and the Navy did all that Bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.

Fortunately for all of us, Eisenhower never had to send that note.

Jim Kushlan

Jim Kushlan
Publisher/*America in WWII* magazine

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944 ! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned ! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory !

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory !

Good Luck ! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

NOTHING LESS THAN FULL VICTORY

Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenhower had stirring words for the men of his Normandy Invasion. After he gave the order to go, every participant in the June 6, 1944, offensive received this copy of his call for "nothing less than full Victory!"

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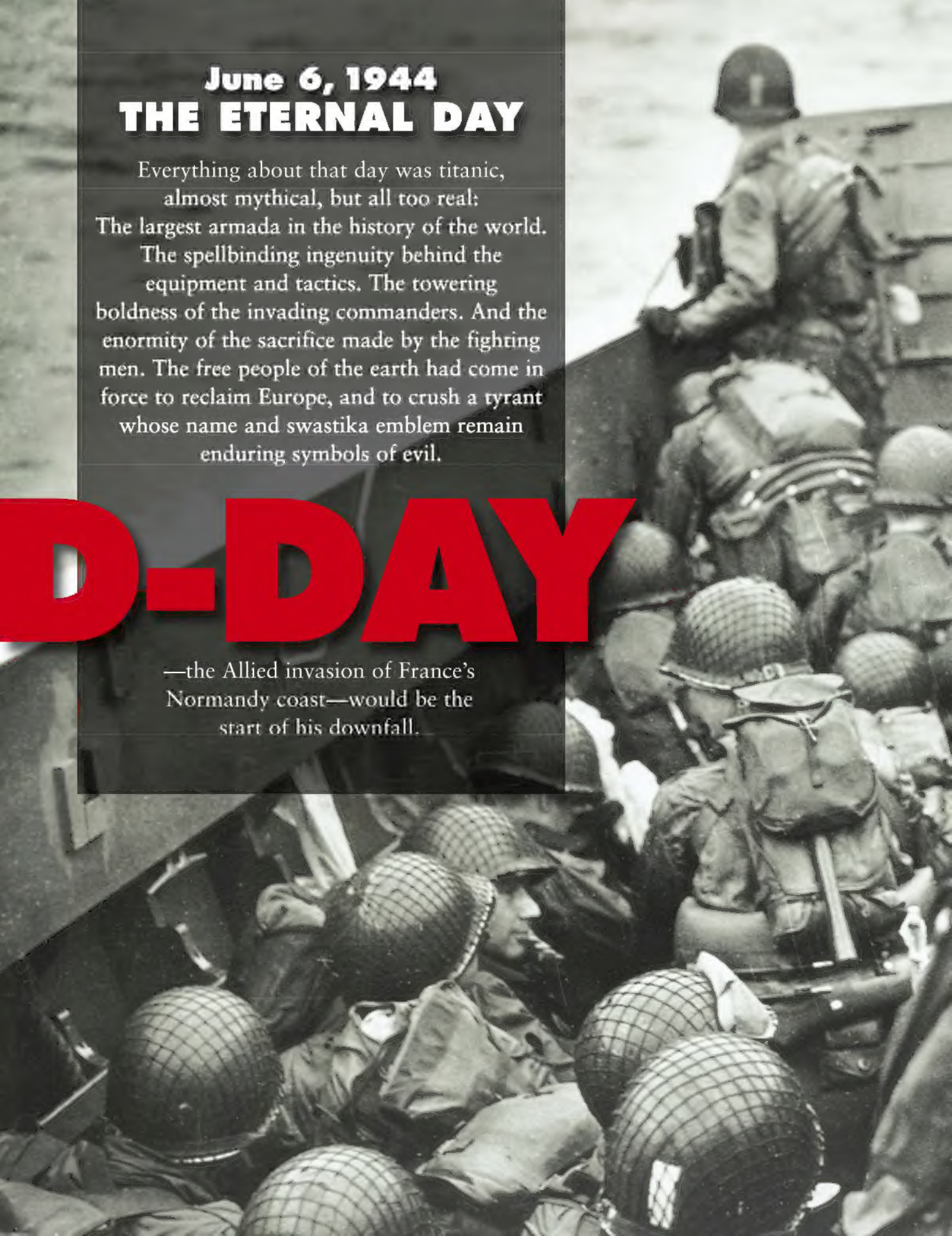


June 6, 1944
THE ETERNAL DAY

Everything about that day was titanic, almost mythical, but all too real: The largest armada in the history of the world. The spellbinding ingenuity behind the equipment and tactics. The towering boldness of the invading commanders. And the enormity of the sacrifice made by the fighting men. The free people of the earth had come in force to reclaim Europe, and to crush a tyrant whose name and swastika emblem remain enduring symbols of evil.

D-DAY

—the Allied invasion of France's Normandy coast—would be the start of his downfall.

REMEMBERING

D-DAY

CHAPTER ONE

Mission: Take the War to Hitler

The Allies had battled the Third Reich in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Now it was time to take the war directly to Adolf Hitler's 'Fortress Europe'—starting with Normandy.

by Eric Ethier

THE BIG STRIKE WAS COMING. Any day, the Allies would launch their great invasion of German-occupied France. The signs were unmistakable. In April 1944, the British Royal Navy suddenly called for amateur boaters to volunteer for duty. Then, British officials abruptly prohibited diplomats from leaving the country and banned visitors from the English Channel coast, where an unprecedented Allied horde had gathered. British and American bombers were hammering German targets in France with a vengeance.

Newsmen were especially jumpy. "Everyone is feeling the pre-invasion tension, but among civilians, magazine editors, perhaps, bear an extra strain," noted the US weekly *The Nation* on May 20, 1944. Stuck with lengthy lead times, magazine staffers feared an untimely arrival of zero hour would cost them the biggest story in modern history.

For two years Allied forces had gnawed at the edges of Nazi Germany's ill-gotten European empire while their military planners built a monstrous machine to attack it head on. By the spring of 1944, the pitiless Soviet Red Army was driving shivering German troops westward across the USSR's frozen tundra. Stubble-faced American and British GIs were fighting methodically up the Italian boot, edging ever closer to the thick forests of the German fatherland. All the while, Allied factories churned out planes and warships, enough to darken Europe's skies and blanket the high seas. Now, the entire free world was on edge, waiting for the Allied hammer to fall somewhere on Adolf Hitler's Fortress Europa.

Serious talk of such a blow had begun two and a half years earlier when Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and the United States entered the war against the Axis powers. Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin pleaded for a second front—a lodgment on the Continent threatening enough to draw Hitler's armies away from his doorstep.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed such an attack was needed. What they could not agree on was when. On the US side, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall pushed for a bold move in northwest Europe. Churchill's underlings, meanwhile, preferred to wear the German war machine down with peripheral attacks, then launch an invasion whose success would be virtually guaranteed. Hashing this out at the Arcadia conference in Washington, DC, in late December 1941, the Brits and Americans decided to prioritize defeating Germany before Japan, mainly for geographic and logistical reasons. But they agreed to put off "any large scale land offensive against Germany" until at least 1943.

The decisive European invasion slid farther and farther into the future as the Combined Chiefs of Staff (Roosevelt's and Churchill's joint chiefs of staff) haggled over strategy and resources, particularly landing craft. These were the ships and boats that could put men, machines, and materiel ashore in an invasion. There simply were not enough LSTs (Landing Ships, Tank), LCIs (Landing Craft, Infantry), LCVPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel), and other transports to accommodate all the proposed offensives. So, a series of compromise operations unfolded. There was a November 1942 invasion of North Africa (Operation Torch); a July 1943 invasion of Sicily (Operation Husky); and, finally, a September 1943 invasion of Italy (Operation Avalanche).

The Italian invasion galled Allied military commanders. The decision to send troops up the impossibly mountainous Italian boot made

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Previous spread: Wearing packs and life belts, their rifles bagged, GIs crouch in a Higgins boat bound for a Normandy beach on D-Day. An officer scans the shore as a tank swims along to the right. Above: Nasty surprises awaited D-Day's invaders. Here, in 1943, German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and others inspect part of Adolf Hitler's Atlantic Wall, a daunting barrier along Europe's coast. Rommel, sent to defend France's Normandy shore, made his sector of the wall particularly deadly. Opposite: The wall's heavy guns could shell invaders on the approach and on the beach. This gun and its concrete emplacement are in the Pas-de-Calais, where Hitler expected an invasion—far from the Allies' real target.

the American brass wonder if they were fighting merely to secure Britain's Mediterranean-area interests. British officers wondered, too. "If our object is to open a tourist office, then certainly let us go to Rome," wrote retired British Major General J.F.C. Fuller. "If it is to run a honeymooners' hotel, then few better places can be found than Naples. But if it is to establish a second front, then our objective is Paris or nothing."

The foot-dragging ended in November 1943, when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at Tehran, Iran. Caught in a frustrating tug-of-war with Churchill over ongoing and proposed Mediterranean operations, Roosevelt got a boost from Stalin. The Soviet leader pledged to commit the Red Army against Japan after Germany's defeat, and argued for the Yanks and Brits to launch a Normandy invasion (Operation Overlord) along with a supporting operation in Southern France (codenamed Anvil and later renamed Dragoon) in May 1944

On December 7, 1943, Roosevelt named General Dwight D. Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and placed the great invasion's fate in his hands. Immediately, the landing craft shortage became a crisis for the tense Eisenhower as the assault force grew from three divisions to seven—five by sea and two by air. The situation became so critical that he pushed D-Day (the invasion date) back to June 5; Anvil, originally intended to coincide with the Normandy landings, was rescheduled for August. Delaying D-Day would cost the Allies a month of summer campaigning, but it bought time to scrape up landing craft from the Mediterranean and the Pacific.

P-38 pilot Lieutenant Albert Lanker photographed Germans installing Normandy beach obstacles at low tide on May 6, 1944. Unseen at high tide, spikes would puncture hulls; timber angles would ground boats, and mines and saws would sink them. Pits in the sea floor would drown troops.

Allied bombers also had another four weeks to pulverize German defenses and all roads leading to France's northern coast.

England, Overlord's staging ground, buzzed with activity. For British civilians, the hubbub soon grew old. "Land Army girls, farmers, and little boys who might once have crammed the roadway to see one tank now turn their backs unconcernedly on the ceaseless military traffic passing throughout England at intervals as precise as telephone poles," *Newsweek*'s London correspondent wrote. The mood was different across the Atlantic. Millions of Americans, recast as living room generals by magazines full of profiles of the latest weapons and military units, sat nervously by their radios, waiting for action.

Asked in April for an estimated invasion date, a tight-lipped General Bernard Montgomery, commander of the British 21st Army Group, pointed only to stepped up bombing of the German heartland. "When Germany is sufficiently stunned," he said, "then we will invade."

The enemy was waiting, too. In late May, when capricious summer tides began churning off the French coast, Germany's Federal Foreign Office fired a shot of its own: "From the fact that Eisenhower has again missed the invasion bus, it may be concluded that he has still not concluded his invasion plans. After all, it is easier to talk invasion than to take the plunge." The comment appeared in *Life* magazine on June 5, 1944. ★

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII*, JUNE 2009

D-DAY GONE WRONG

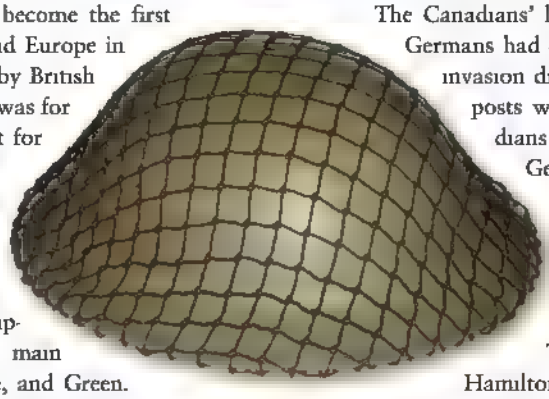
Nearly two years before Allied troops waded onto Normandy's shores, a botched amphibious invasion ended in tragedy.

by Brian John Murphy

THE JUNE 1944 NORMANDY INVASION WASN'T THE ALLIES' FIRST STAB at gaining a foothold in German-occupied France. As early as 1942, the Allied high command was discussing a possible invasion across the English Channel, and by that summer they would launch an experimental version of this assault.

This preliminary invasion was intended to be no more than a temporary incursion and brief occupation—a dress rehearsal for a later permanent and full scale amphibious invasion of France. The idea was to capture a port city, a feat that, if duplicated in a later, all-out invasion, would make it easier to supply the invading armies as they moved inland. So it was that the Allied brass set its sights on Dieppe, France, near the Pas-de-Calais, where the English Channel is narrowest.

Strategists decided the Dieppe attack would be a Canadian 2nd Division show. The division had been in England for two years, and the men were bored with routine and eager for action. British troops and marines would join in the operation, along with 49 US Army Rangers. These Rangers would become the first American forces to set foot on mainland Europe in World War II. The plan, as developed by British Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, was for the invaders to seize the port, occupy it for 48 hours, and get back out.



British Royal Air Force fighters—48 Spitfire squadrons and three all American RAF Eagle Squadrons—would cover the landings. A 237 ship task force would deliver the troops and supply supporting gunfire. There would be four main beaches, east to west: Blue, Red, White, and Green. Forces on Blue and Green would land on either side of Dieppe. Red and White forces would assault the city directly. Commandos would land on east and west flank beaches, Yellow and Orange (where the Rangers would be with No. 4 Commando). Thirty new Churchill heavy infantry tanks would make their debut in the raid.

Preparation for the invasion turned out to be inadequate, however—especially the air reconnaissance. RAF planes flew sorties over the landing beaches and their approaches, but none of these airborne observers noticed the enemy's underwater minefield and the many gun emplacements, pillboxes, and machine-gun nests. Nor did anyone discover that the Germans regularly patrolled the waters off Dieppe with the nimble torpedo boats known to the Allies as E boats (and to the Germans as S-boats, from *schnellboote*, "fast boats"). This last omission would derail the invasion from the outset.

The Allied invasion force set out across the English Channel toward Dieppe on the morning of August 19, 1942. Early on, E-boats struck several ships, shedding the first Allied blood of the raid. More E boats attacked as the task force neared the shore, sinking a Canadian landing craft.

The Canadians' luck got worse fast. By coincidence, the Germans had decided to run a full rehearsal—an anti-invasion drill—on that very morning. All defensive posts were manned and ready when the Canadians loaded into their landing crafts. Two German regiments awaited the invaders. The German 571st Infantry defended Dieppe, the adjacent village of Puys, and a radar station at Pourville. West of the city, the 570th Infantry defended a battery at Berneval.

Two regiments of Canadians, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, landed at White Beach, attacking the city itself. To the east, on Red Beach, the Essex Scottish Regiment assaulted the city beach with 553 men

The Scots ran into a buzz saw. The Germans had cleared fields of fire by razing tourist hotels and establishing a multitude of machine-gun nests. In Dieppe's old casino, pillboxes marred the ground floor, while snipers perched in the upper floors. Barbed wire on the beach was 6 to 10 feet thick. More trimmed the top of

LEFT: COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION, OPPOSITE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Above: At World War II's outset, US and British forces wore the same steel headgear—the Brodie helmet, which Americans called the M1917 and Brits called the Mark I. Opposite: The 49 US Army Rangers who joined the mostly Canadian invasion of Dieppe, France, were still wearing Brodies when they hit the beach on August 19, 1942. Here, Rangers aboard a British landing craft brace themselves for the fiery struggle ahead.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

US 1st Ranger Battalion men advance under fire on Dieppe's Orange beach. Three Rangers would be killed at Dieppe. The first was Lieutenant E.V. Loustalot, who took charge of No. 4 Commando's multi-national assault after the unit's British captain was killed. Loustalot was cut down while assaulting a cliff-top German machine-gun nest.

the seawall, and still more protected the esplanade beyond. Only 20 Allied soldiers ever got beyond the beach. The Scots suffered 91 percent casualties while pinned down on the sloping ground.

On White Beach, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry reached the casino and cleared out the bottom two floors. Elements of the regiment forced their way into town but failed to capture their objective, the telephone exchange. Of the 582 Royal Hamiltons who assaulted Dieppe, 63 percent were killed, wounded, or captured.

The Royal Canadian Navy landed Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal west of White Beach. The 584-man regiment suffered 79 percent casualties.

The Calgary Tank Regiment of Churchill tanks arrived 10 minutes late and wasn't there to cover the infantry landing. As a result, about 200 ground troops were lost. Two tanks of the Calgary Regiment went down in the water with their crews. Many of the rest bogged down in sand and shingle on the beach. But several tanks outflanked the seawall and engaged the German defenders from the esplanade. Forty three percent of the 417 tank crewmen were casualties.

On Blue Beach, east of the city, the Royal Regiment of Canada, with elements of the British Black Watch Regiment, were shredded by machine-gun fire. Only a few men ever got off the steeply sloped beaches. By day's end, half of the 554 men had died or were fatally wounded. Only 65 made the trip home, and only 22 of those were unwounded.

The South Saskatchewan Regiment and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada assaulted Green Beach west of the city. The Highlanders landed with bagpipes skirling and made the deepest penetration of all, two miles inland, but were stopped short of the German airfield that was their target. Forty seven percent of their 503 men were casualties.

The South Saskatchewan Regiment, meanwhile, landed west of its objective and had to cross a bridge under heavy fire to reach it. The courageous Lieutenant Colonel Charles Cecil Merritt led the way. He would receive a Victoria Cross, the pinnacle of military honors in the British Commonwealth, for his effort. One survivor recounted Merritt's heroic leadership:

"Now men," he said, "we're going to get across. Follow me. Don't bunch up together, spread out. Here we go!" Erect and bareheaded, he strode forward onto the bridge. His helmet hung from his wrist as he walked. As I watched him lead his men through that thundering barrage, I felt a quiver run up and down my spine. I'd never seen anything like it.

Later in the day Merritt would lead a tough rearguard action covering the withdrawal from the beach. Of 523 South Saskatchewan infantrymen who fought, 32 percent were killed, wounded, or captured.

Some 3,263 men had landed at Dieppe. The invasion force as a whole suffered 60 percent casualties. The Royal Canadian Air Force lost 119 planes and the Royal Canadian Navy 555 men killed. Of the Canadian casualties, 907 had been killed in action. Three US Rangers died, and others were captured.

The disastrous bloodbath taught the Allies valuable lessons about amphibious operations and ruled out any possibility of directly assaulting another port city. Canada remembers with pride and sorrow the raw courage and daring of her sons at Dieppe—and the heavy price they paid for the success of the D-Day landings at Normandy almost two years later. ★

Brian John Murphy *of Fairfield, Connecticut, is a contributing editor of* America *in WWII.*

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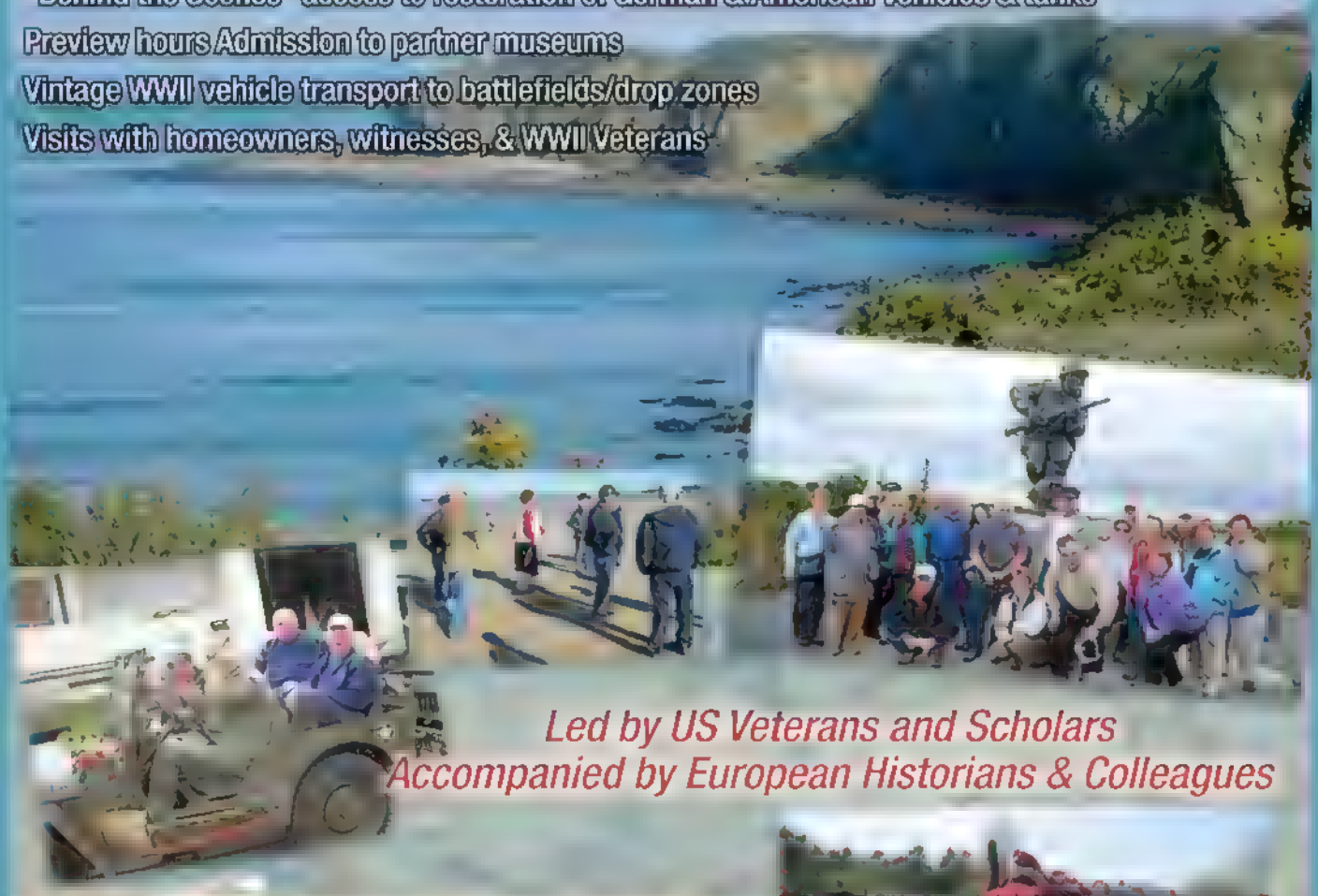

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"My grandfather and I can't thank you enough. We had a wonderful journey together. He still talks about it."

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REMEMBERING
D-DAY
CHAPTER TWO

Building the Great Invasion

As earth's most colossal invasion force crowded into England, General Dwight Eisenhower set to work preparing his men to change the course of history.

by Eric Ethier

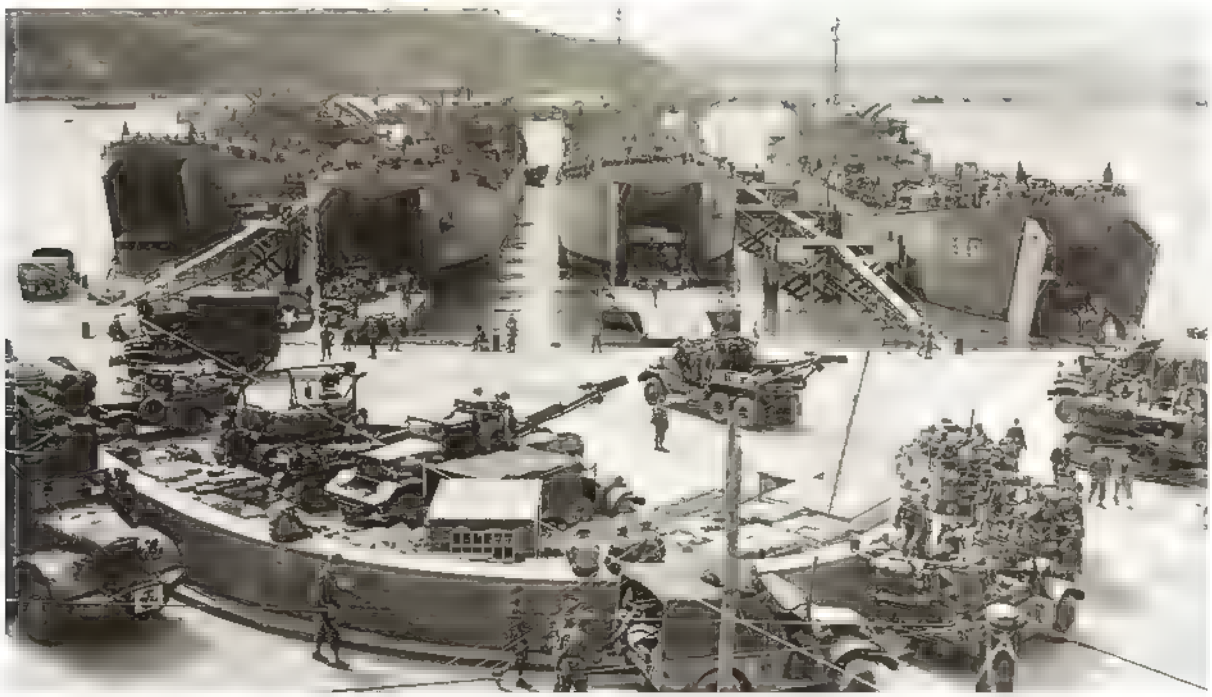
CHAPTER TWO • BUILDING THE GREAT INVASION

Operation Overlord's sputtering engines roared to life in January 1944 when Eisenhower moved into temporary offices at 47 Grosvenor Square, London. For nearly a year, a British and American team dubbed COSSAC (for Chief of Staff to Supreme Allied Command) and led by Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan had labored to produce the operation's first detailed plan, a proposed three-division lunge at the beaches of Caen, France. Now, with the invasion force nearly doubled and D-Day just six months away, Eisenhower pitched in with undisguised urgency to reshape and finalize the plan.

The chain-smoking, 53 year-old Eisenhower—former Allied commander in the Mediterranean—quickly picked his lieutenants, men who would help him prosecute his campaign. First was his deputy supreme commander, British Air Chief Marshal Arthur W. Tedder. British Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay would head up the mammoth Allied Naval Expeditionary Force, and British Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory would command the Allied Expeditionary Air Force. For command of the 21st Army Group assault forces—the US First Army and British 2nd Army—Eisenhower chose outspoken British General Sir Bernard Montgomery. US Lieutenant General Omar Bradley would lead the First Army.

The most logical location for the assault was along the Pas-de-Calais, a stretch of French coast just 22 miles from England and 150 miles from the German border. But here, German defenses promised to be stiffest. Tweaking Morgan's plan, Eisenhower's brain trust switched the target from Caen to a 60-mile stretch along the Bay of the Seine, where the German front stretched from below the brim of the Cotentin Peninsula east to the mouth of the Orne River. There, the assault divisions would land at five code-named beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. The Normandy coast lacked the ports offered by the Calais area, but it was within reach of the strategically essential fortified port of Cherbourg. Besides, the Allies were bringing their own artificial harbors—codenamed Mulberries—fantastic composites of concrete blocks the size of buildings

Ultimately, the invasion's success would hinge on what bait the Allies could make Hitler swallow. Under the umbrella of deception efforts with code names such as Fortitude and Quicksilver, Allied intelligence supplied turncoat German agents with details of faux assaults at Calais and even Norway. Reporting to his trusting German handlers three days after D-Day, a British double



ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Previous spread: A sea of helmet liners (minus their outer "steel pots") fills a Cambridge, England, athletic field as GIs attend Memorial Day services on May 30, 1944. A week later, they and other Allied troops will sweep onto France's Normandy coast to confront the Nazis. Above: Making ready for the invasion's English Channel crossing, artillery units roll their equipment, vehicles, and supplies into the yawning holds of LCTs (Landing Craft, Tank) at Brixham, England, on June 1. On the left, near the dock's edge, a truck carries a disassembled observation plane. Opposite: Order and calm—and a smile on the lead GI—reveal this as practice for D-Day, rather than the real thing. The troops are exiting LCI(L)-326, a Landing Craft, Infantry (Large), perhaps at Slapton Sands along England's Devon coastline.

326
US

BUILDING THE GREAT INVASION • SIDE STORY

SNEAKY BUSINESS

by Brian John Murphy

THE GERMANS KNEW the Allies would cross the English Channel to invade France in 1944. The question was where. The best German thinking was that the invasion would target the Pas-de-Calais, the region around the port of Calais—and the point in France nearest to England and Allied air cover. The British and Americans had a vested interest in keeping the Germans thinking this way, for their actual target was Normandy.

To keep the Germans' focus on the Pas-de-Calais, American and British intelligence officers concocted an elaborate deception scheme codenamed Fortitude. The scheme's pre-invasion objectives were to divert German attention and resources away from the Normandy landing zones and to get the Germans to place their strongest forces in the Calais region. Fortitude's post-invasion objective was to get the Germans to believe the Normandy landings were just a diversion and that the main effort was about to strike Calais. If the Germans believed that, they would withhold reserves from Normandy for use at Calais.

Under Fortitude, the Allies created two imaginary armies. They stationed a fictional British army in Scotland to threaten an invasion of Norway, and concentrated an elaborate phony American army—the First US Army Group, or FUSAG—in East Anglia and England's southeast corner. In command was Lieutenant General George S. Patton, who was marking time until he would debut as commander of the very real US 3rd Army, about two months after D-Day.

Planners created wholly fictional FUSAG divisions and

Above: US and British military schemers used a mix of disinformation and stagecraft—such as this inflatable landing craft, complete with bow ramp—to disguise the invasion's true target and make the Allied host seem larger. Opposite, top: The deception reached its peak in the First US Army Group (FUSAG), a bogus force under Lieutenant General George S. Patton. FUSAG even had insignia for its make-believe fighting units; GIs wore them in public so spies could record the "intelligence." Here, a scorpion bristles on the sleeve patch of the faux US 22nd Infantry Division. Opposite, bottom: A GI watches over a tank he could probably lift and throw.

corps. Radio traffic was generated according to a thick book of elaborate instructions on how to simulate the arrival of a unit, the setting up of camp, and the preparation and stocking of supplies for an invasion. The transmissions gave the enemy the impression that there were 70 percent more troops in England than there really were.

There was a chance that German reconnaissance planes or yet-undetected spies might inspect southeast England and East Anglia, so the Americans created a dummy army. In East Anglia and near the coast of the Channel, they erected tent cities that appeared to be army camps complete with mess halls, motor pools, artillery parks, and first aid stations. Inflatable two-and a half-ton trucks, Sherman tanks, jeeps, and artillery enhanced the illusion of a million man army assembling to attack Calais. In villages and in London, the deception took the form of soldiers walking the city streets wearing bogus shoulder patches of the fictitious FUSAG divisions.

PATCH, ABOVE: COURTESY OF THE RAMKAS COLLECTION

The British brought an element of showmanship to the deception. They employed a music hall magician and scenery and special effects experts from their movie industry to create what would appear to high-altitude reconnaissance flights to be scores of landing craft choking the waterways of eastern England. Close up, the craft were just contraptions of canvas, sticks, and baling wire floating on oil drums. Near Dover, British scene designers created a mock oil dock out of painted wood, sewer pipes, and fiberboard. King George VI even helped out with the con game by visiting the fake facility, which the Lord Mayor of Dover predicted publicly would be a valuable asset after the war.

Meanwhile, the British Double Cross Committee, or XX Committee, used German spies who had been captured after parachuting into England over the previous few years, to feed information to the German intelligence agency Abwehr. Spies who volunteered to participate sent messages written by the British, reinforcing the story that after a secondary attack, the main blow would strike at the Pas-de-Calais.

THE GERMANS RELIED ON Captain Roland Garby-Czerniawski, a trusted Polish agent of the Abwehr. But Garby-Czerniawski was actually working for the British under the codename Brutus. He told the Germans he had been appointed liaison between Patton's FUSAG headquarters and the Free French.

Also feeding the Germans a line was Juan Pujol, codenamed Garbo. He radioed the Germans that he had wrangled a high government post and was able to place 14 agents for Germany all over England. The Germans ate up the falsified information from Garbo's phony ring, all of which reinforced that the main invasion targeted Calais.

Allied intelligence even used a captured German general to spread the deception. The ailing General Hans Cramer, about to be sent home because of his poor health, was wined and dined before departure. In their feigned inebriated state, the Allied hosts of the bash pretended to let slip information that indicated an attack on Calais. When Cramer was debriefed back home, the Calais deception again infected German intelligence.

As D-Day neared, the deception proved to be working. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Normandy Invasion, received intercepted encoded German radio reports that indicated the Germans had bought it hook, line, and sinker.

On D-Day, the Allies wanted to confuse German defenders in the areas where American paratroopers would be dropped before dawn. They developed a dummy paratrooper. About one-third scale, it looked like the real thing as it came to the ground. When the dummies landed, they set off pyrotechnics that sounded like machine-gun fire. They did add to the enemy's confusion, but not as much as the real but inadvertently scattered US airdrop that night did.

After D-Day, FUSAG activities intensified, creating the impression that a bigger blow was being aimed at Calais. Adolf Hitler reacted accordingly, diverting resources to defend the French port and delaying other reinforcements that could have been committed to Normandy in a more timely way. In fact, Hitler held back his entire 15th Army from Army Group B in Normandy. The deception lingered on, creating the impression that FUSAG was being cannibalized for replacements on the Normandy front.

Operation Fortitude achieved all its goals. It diverted attention from the Normandy landings and kept Hitler's eye on Calais, where there were never any landings. It may have been the greatest wartime deception since the Trojan Horse. ★

BRIAN JOHN MURPHY, *a contributing editor of* America in WWII, *writes from Fairfield, Connecticut.*

agent codenamed Garbo would call the Normandy operations "a diversionary manoeuver designed to draw off enemy reserves in order then to make a decisive attack in another place." Eisenhower pulled General George S. Patton into the shell game. Taking him off the sidelines, he assigned him a new command—a phony army complete with enough rubber tanks to convince German high altitude reconnaissance pilots that the Allies had a new threat. All the while, code-breakers monitored German radio traffic for signs that the trickery was working.

THE DECEPTION EXTENDED TO Allied air efforts. Strategic bombing of Germany had begun in earnest a year earlier, and the flow of replacement planes to the far-flung Luftwaffe had slowed to a crawl due to heavy raids on factories and airfields. But in April 1944, Leigh Mallory broadened the target list to include roads, bridges, rail lines, and German defense installations in the assault area—*and* enough sites across France to disguise the Allied focus. As D Day approached, Allied planes dumped 76,200 tons of bombs on the French transportation system alone. "Many of the Wehrmacht [German army] will be dead—or as good as dead—when Allied barges scrape on Europe's shore," the US Army's *Yank* magazine opined.

Yank was undoubtedly correct, but Field Marshal Karl Gerd von Rundstedt, commander of German forces in Western Europe, still had plenty of men left. Watching over Normandy Rundstedt had Field Marshal Erwin "Desert Fox" Rommel, whose Afrika Korps once terrorized North Africa with its tanks. Now Rommel commanded Army Group B, an important part of which was Colonel General Friedrich Dollman's 7th Army. Along the Allies' intended landing beaches, Rommel had stationed the 7th Army's 709th, 352nd, 716th, and 711th divisions, west to east. Several other divisions were within striking range, but only one Panzer division, the 21st, offered the heavy tanks Rommel considered crucial to his defense.

Of great concern to the Allies was the state of Adolf Hitler's fabled Atlantic Wall, the bristling concrete and steel belt that stretched more than 3,000 miles from the frosty sod of Norway and along the coasts of Denmark and France to the Spanish border. Envisioning an impregnable barrier studded with 15,000–20,000 defensive positions and packed with half a million defenders, the zealous Hitler had ordered the wall constructed in early 1942. Bloodied Canadian paratroopers felt its bite that August during a disastrous raid at Dieppe, France. Still, as late as December 1943, Rommel found the wall wholly lacking. He set about giving it real teeth.

To the Desert Fox, that meant mines. During the first six months of 1944, his men planted at least five million of them along the soggy Normandy coast. Construction details also raced to cement-in 47 massive coastal guns and to layer beaches with mine-topped stakes, barbed wire, and nasty clusters of welded steel designed to tear open ship hulls and reroute soldiers into German fields of fire. Inland, Rommel flooded potential glider landing sites or filled them with vertically planted poles sharpened at the top and dubbed "Rommel's asparagus."

Despite all this ugliness, the wall remained shallow and weak in

Above: Toting all the weapons and gear they will wear or carry onto the beach on D-Day, soldiers of an American unit head for the docks in Weymouth, southern England. There, the men will board a transport ship for the English Channel crossing. An inflatable life belt dangles from the hand of the GI farthest to the left. Opposite: Under a landing ship's bow, GIs board a Higgins boat for the trip to their transport ship, anchored in a British harbor. Overhead, a tethered barrage balloon protects against any low-flying enemy planes that attempt an attack during the crossing.

BUILDING THE GREAT INVASION • SIDE STORY

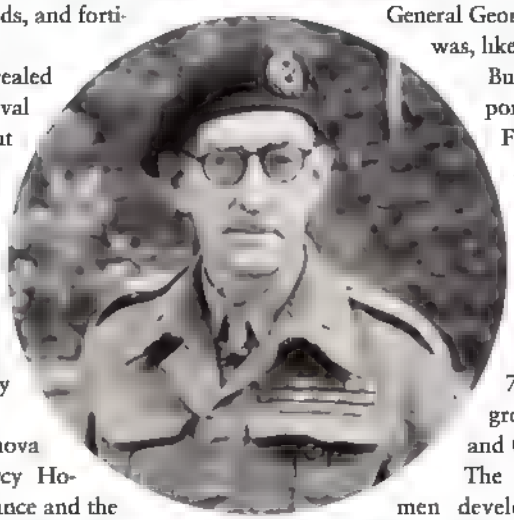
HOBART'S FUNNIES

by Michael Edwards

THE AUGUST 19, 1942, ALLIED LANDINGS at German-occupied Dieppe, France, were a disaster. A majority of the attackers were killed, wounded, or captured. But that dark day imparted critical lessons for the future, prompting the Allied brass to rethink its strategies for invasion landings.

Hindsight showed that the lag between the naval shelling of enemy positions and the arrival of tanks on the beach gave Dieppe's defenders a chance to attack the landing troops, who had nothing to protect themselves besides what they could carry. Support from long range guns needed improvement. So did the capability for assaulting forces to cut through beach obstacles, minefields, and fortified enemy positions.

Bitter experience had already revealed that the flat trajectory of most naval gunfire was not ideal for knocking out fortified enemy positions. US Marines learned this lesson the hard way at Tarawa in November 1943. The most effective artillery fire in such situations had a high trajectory. The higher the arc, the greater a round's explosive power. But this sort of support was not typically available during a landing.



Clearly, the Allies needed new, innovative equipment. Major-General Percy Hobart, a veteran of World War I in France and the Middle East who had joined the British Royal Tank Corps as a military engineer in the early 1920s, would be the man to create it. Hobart thrived with the tank corps and became a disciple of the great British theorist of armored warfare, Captain Basil Liddell Hart. Hobart worked to modernize the Royal Tank Corps, addressing issues of command, supply, ordnance, and communication.

Many of the British military's higher-ups opposed Hobart and his changes, and he found himself more and more marginalized. His last assignment before World War II was in Egypt, forming and training the British 7th Armoured Division, which would become famous as the Desert Rats. A personality clash eventually led General Archibald Wavell, general officer commanding in-chief of Middle East Command, to dismiss Hobart, who retired from the army in 1940.

As Adolf Hitler built a European empire by force, the man who had upgraded British armored forces for modern warfare sat at home in Oxford, a volunteer corporal in the British Home Guard. Prime Minister Winston Churchill plucked Hobart from this lowly spot and put him in charge of the 11th Armoured Division. Hobart wasted no time turning the 11th into a superb fighting outfit, only to have his age and competency questioned. Command of the 11th passed to Major-General George Philip Bradley Roberts. At least he was, like Hobart, one of Hart's disciples.

But Hobart retained Churchill's support, and the prime minister directed Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, commander of the British Army, to find him a new post. That post was command of the 79th (Experimental) Armoured Division. Brooke tasked Hobart and his men with developing specialized armored fighting vehicles for invasion landings. The 79th ceased operating as a unified group and was parceled out to British and Canadian units

The odd looking tanks Hobart and his men developed earned the name Hobart's Funnies. There were tanks that cleared mines, retrieved broken-down vehicles, laid bridges, and more. The strangest model was probably the duplex drive (DD) tank, a Sherman tank fitted with a sort of two-ply canvas bag that could be pulled up from the bottom to cover the vehicle and inflated so it would float. These tanks had a special duplex drive train, which powered the treads on land and rear outboard propellers on water.

The DD tank's performance in battle was mixed. Most of those launched at Omaha Beach on D-Day were swamped by the English Channel's choppy waters, sending many

Above: The brain that gave birth to D-Day's most unusual tanks—machines that swam, laid mats over sand, filled ditches with sticks, flailed the earth to destroy mines, and more—belonged to Major-General Sir Percy "Hobo" Hobart. As commander of the British 79th Armoured Division, he developed armored vehicles designed to meet the challenges of D-Day's beaches. Opposite: The Americans used Hobart's swimming DD tank, but creations such as this mine-clearing Crab served only on British and Canadian beaches.

RIGHT & OPPOSITE: IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

crews to their deaths. They had been launched too far from shore, steadily took on too much water, and disappeared beneath the surface. Only two made it ashore under their own power. DD tanks had more success on other Normandy beaches, because they were launched closer to shore or put directly on the beach from transport ships. The DD tank was the only one of Hobart's Funnies that Americans used.

ANOTHER SPECIALIZED HOBART VEHICLE was the Crab, a mine-clearing flail tank. Originally used by the British in North Africa, the Crab featured a rotating drum with chains attached to it. Extended a safe distance from the front of the vehicle, the drum spun, beating the ground with the chains to detonate mines. The flail tank was used to clear mines on invasion beaches

The Armored Vehicle Royal Engineers was actually a variety of models—different takes on a Churchill tank to perform different tasks. One model carried a large bundle of wood in front that could be dropped into a ditch so vehicles could safely pass over. Another, the Bobbin, carried a steel pole reinforced cloth on a spool at its front. The cloth could be unrolled on a sandy beach to provide better footing for vehicles. Yet another model was designed to take out fortified positions. Its main armament was replaced with a 290mm Petard Spigot Mortar, which fired a highly explosive round that was ideal for destroying bunkers. Reloading was dangerous under fire, however, since the job had to be done outside the tank.

Two other notable Hobart Funnies were the Beach Armored Recovery Vehicle (BARV) and the Caterpillar D8 bulldozer. The BARV was a Sherman waterproofed for use along the water. In place of its turret was an armored superstructure that equipped it to shove aside immobilized vehicles that blocked beach approaches. The Caterpillar did yeoman service clearing obstacles placed on beaches by the enemy, cleaning up debris, and filling in shell craters.

The battlefield results of Hobart's ingenious new armored vehicles were mixed, but one thing was clear: Hobart's Funnies made an undeniable contribution to the success of the Normandy Invasion. ☆

Historian MICHAEL EDWARDS *writes from New Orleans on the war in Europe, Higgins boats, WWII Louisiana, and more.*

places. Still, by May Rommel was outwardly confident. "My inventions are coming into action," he wrote. "Thus I am looking forward to the battle with profoundest confidence." Circulating quietly among German ranks, Gestapo agents found "virtually no fear of the invasion discernible."

No matter how long his wall slowed the Allies, Rommel expected them to breach it and provoke a decisive fight along the coast. There, he felt, quick responding tank units could destroy them. Von Rundstedt, however, preferred to settle the matter farther inland. This tug-of-war over defensive philosophy could only add to German troubles on D-Day.

ALONG ENGLAND'S ROCKY SOUTHERN COAST, meanwhile, a wobbly legged behemoth was takings its first steps. More than two years in the making, the Overlord force included 1.5 million American soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen, and other personnel. This monster's hammer fist was its shore-going assault force: 175,000 men, 20,000 vehicles (including 1,500 tanks and 5,000 other tracked vehicles), plus 3,000 guns of all sizes, backed by 144,000 tons of supplies. Unleashed against the French coast, this beast would smash through the Atlantic Wall.

Organization of this immense force had been under way for two years. Even while Allied leaders were haggling over the timing of an invasion of France in capital cities across half the world, early preparations were in progress in England. At first things moved slowly, due to the Allied efforts in North Africa and the Mediterranean. But American troop strength on the island increased from 107,000 in February 1943 to 750,000 in January 1944—and then quickly doubled. Into vast new supply depots went endless crates of everything from rations and uniforms to blankets, ammunition, and small arms. Fresh spring grass yellowed beneath endless acres of shiny new Sherman tanks, clumsy-looking Waco and Horsa gliders, clunky amphibious DUKWs (pronounced "ducks"), half tracks, jeeps, and self-propelled guns.

The young men who poured into English ports, into troop camps, and then into training centers were as untried as the M-1 rifles placed in their hands. If they had heard stories of GI landings in Italy or North Africa, or of bloody marine assaults in the far-off Pacific, they were hardly ready to duplicate them. But weeks of drills, imbedded discipline, and roadwork changed that. During a February 1944 visit, *New York Times* correspondent Drew Middleton found Overlord's recruits not merely a vast improvement over the GIs baptized in North Africa's Operation Torch, but "undoubtedly the best trained, best equipped and physically toughest army ever raised by Americans."

For the assault units, intense training led to elaborate dress rehearsals. One such drill, codenamed Tiger, led to calamity. On the night of April 28–29, in the darkened waters off an English Channel–side stretch of beach known as Slapton Sands, German E-boats (speedy torpedo boats) slid past Allied destroyers and sank two of the valuable LSTs (Landing Ships, Tank), leaving the invasion force with no LSTs in reserve. Worse, more than 700 Allied soldiers and sailors died. Fearing the incident's effect on morale, jittery Allied officials buried the victims quietly and hushed up the affair. But a stomach turning question lingered: Had Overlord been compromised?

There was little time left for worrying. By the end of May, gray-skinned warships crowded the harbors of Plymouth, Portsmouth, and a handful of other English ports. Ramsay's Allied Naval Expeditionary Force was an astounding result of intricate organization and planning. Its 2,700 vessels carried 2,600 smaller assault craft in two task forces. Rear Admiral Philip Vian's Eastern Task Force comprised 1,800 vessels bound for Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches with British and Canadian units. And Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk's Western Task Force consisted of 930 ships that would carry American forces to Omaha and Utah beaches. Boosted by the postponement of Operation Anvil, American logistics men had managed to scrape together just enough assault landing craft. There were 230 LSTs, 250 LCIs (Landing Craft, Infantry) 900 LCTs (Landing Craft, Tank), and 1,100 LCVPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel)—the rectangular, wide-mouthed Higgins boats that were churned out at a frantic pace by New Orleans boat builder Andrew J. Higgins.

Anxious troops began boarding transports on May 29, and by June 3 the entire Allied host was afloat. By then, however, the weather was beginning to turn ugly. The D-Day forecast called for high winds and heavy cloud cover—dangerous conditions for ships and planes. So, Eisenhower reset the invasion for the next day, Tuesday, June 6, only to hear subsequent reports predicting only the narrowest window of fair weather for that morning.

The supreme commander hesitated. Postponing the assault would mean waiting two more weeks, due to ever-changing tides. As unknowing thousands waited impatiently aboard their ships, Eisenhower weighed the opinions of his subordinates during a tense June 4 sit-down. Then, he gambled: the assault was on.

Opposite: General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander in the European theater, nearly scrubbed the attack due to poor weather, but gave the order to go based on a forecast window of better conditions. Here, he talks with 101st Airborne paratroopers ready to jump into Normandy before dawn on D-Day. Above: Aboard a navy vessel at Weymouth, England, a sailor gives a GI a light. Markings behind the two men's heads show the vessel has seen combat in invasions of Sicily and Italy. Soon, the crew will be able to add Normandy to its battle list.

Eisenhower's decision spelled relief for soggy troops crammed inside the transport ships for more than a day. But was he triggering a war-winning attack or sending untold thousands to watery graves? A note he penned the next day reflected the angst that gnawed at him: "Our landings in the Cherbourg Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone." He hoped he would never need to release this statement.

men and equipment alike. Aboard *LCI(L)*-92 (the second L stands for "large"), young US Coast Guard photographer Seth Shepard climbed carefully down stairs from a bobbing deck shortly after 10:00 P.M. "I couldn't go right off to sleep," he wrote later, "but the last thing I remember was the one shaded light hanging down over the mess table, swinging back and forth and sending its faint rays over the tiers of three bunks, most of them filled with sleeping forms, relaxed and trusting and not knowing what hell they would be facing in less than 10 hours."

The foul weather proved a boon to the Allies. Reviewing their own weather forecasts, German naval officials had canceled their

Opposite: Coastguardsman Harry Firman of St. Louis, Missouri, a motor machinist's mate, third class, plays his records as his LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry) makes its way across the channel. Listening with him are 90th Infantry Division troops bound for the Normandy beach codenamed Utah.

Above: Beneath barrage balloons, lines of LCIs filled with American assault troops churn toward the beaches of Normandy's Bay of the Seine early on the morning of June 6. Paratroopers are already at work on the ground. Tanks and troops are arriving on shore. D-Day has begun.

On June 5, while a squadron of ships feinted toward Calais from the north, Ramsay's hulking fleet poured south from the English coast to rendezvous below the Isle of Wight at a mid-channel swath dubbed Piccadilly Circus. There, the ships funneled into five columns and steamed south. Aboard Kirk's flagship USS *Augusta*, a group of officers sat down to a steak dinner. "The last supper," someone quipped.

At roughly 6:30 P.M. the minesweeper USS *Osprey* struck a mine and sank, taking six crewmen with her. Wind gusts whipped the seas, hurling five-foot waves against steel hulls and jarring

nighttime sweep of the channel. And Rommel, ruling out the possibility of a June 6 attack, had flown home to Germany to see his wife.

After midnight on June 6, waves of C-47s lugging paratroopers of the US 82nd and 101st airborne divisions swept eastward over the Cotentin Peninsula. Allied bombers droned toward the broad assault area. And Admiral Kirk's creaking Western Task Force ships closed on their invasion stations, a dozen miles off the still quiet Normandy coast. ★

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII* (JUNE 2009)

REMEMBERING

D-DAY

BUILDING THE GREAT INVASION • SIDE STORY

WINGED FURY

IN THE FIRST WAR WHERE AIR POWER was destined to play a decisive role, it was only natural that aerial bombing and strafing would be important parts of the great invasion of Normandy. Ironically, however, Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenhower had to argue, negotiate, and finally compromise to get heavy bombers of the British Royal Air Force's Bomber Command and the US Strategic Air Forces to cripple Normandy's rail and road transportation before the invasion. The heavies did get the job done, however, dramatically reducing the Germans' ability to move men, weapons, and supplies around swiftly to oppose the Allied invasion. More heavy bombing came as D-Day opened. Starting at midnight on June 5, RAF bombers pounded enemy coastal batteries and the occupied city and transportation hub of Caen, just inland from the Allied landing beaches on France's Calvados coast. At dawn, some 1,200 American B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator heavy bombers unleashed their payloads on enemy coastal positions. Despite all this, and despite substantial shelling by Allied naval vessels, most of the German heavy artillery emplacements and machine-gun nests were still perfectly and lethally operational as the multinational Allied amphibious forces hit Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches. (An exception was Pointe du Hoc, where aerial bombs and naval artillery forced the Germans to relocate 155mm guns.) Throughout D-Day, the Ninth US Army Air Force supported Allied ground forces with low-altitude bombing by B-26 Marauder medium bombers (like the one pictured here, soaring high over a landing beach and wearing invasion stripes so Allied anti-aircraft gunners won't target it). On Utah beach, B-26s obliterated a key enemy position at La Madeleine. All the while, the nimble fighters and fighter-bombers of the US Army Air Forces—P-47 Thunderbolts, P-51 Mustangs, and twin-fuselage P-38 Lightnings—and the RAF—Spitfires, Hurricanes, and Typhoons—slashed at any and all German vehicle and infantry traffic on roads, interdicting the movement of reinforcements. ★

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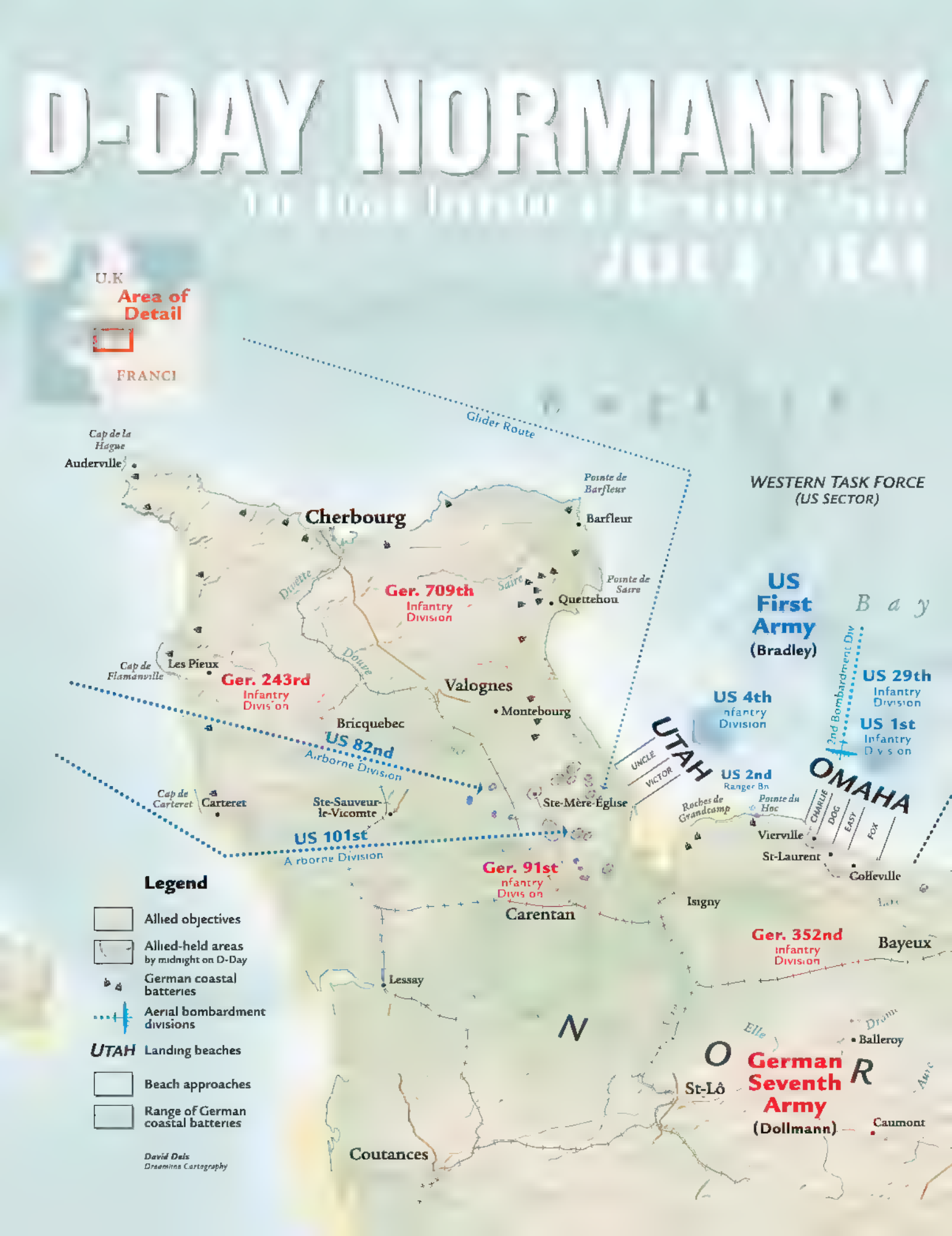
D-DAY NORMANDY



Key US Ground Combat Units

Patches courtesy of the William S. Jackson Collection

US 1st *Infantry Division*

US 4th *Infantry Division*

US 2nd *Ranger Battalion*

US 29th *Infantry Division*

US 82nd *Airborne Division*

US 101st *Airborne Division*

C h a n n e l

EASTERN TASK FORCE
(BRITISH SECTOR)

APPROX. RANGE OF GERMAN COASTAL BATTERIES

t h e S e i n e

British Second Army
(Dempsey)

Br. 50th Infantry Division

1st Bombardment Div

Can. 3rd Infantry Division

3rd Bombardment Div

Br. 3rd Infantry Division

Br. 6th Airborne Division

GOLD

ITEM

JIG

KING

JUNO

MIKE

NAN

SWORD

OBOE

PETER

QUEEN

ROGER

Courseulles

Ger. 716th Infantry Division

Ouistreham

Caen

Troarn

Ger. 711th Infantry Division

Ger. 21st Panzer Division

Vimont

Mézidon

Houlgate

Cabourg

Dives

Cap d'Antifer

Fécamp

Cap de la Hève

Le Havre

Bolbec

Honfleur

Seine

Trouville

Pont-Audemer

Lisieux

Bernay

N

W

E

S

0 10 km

0 10 mi

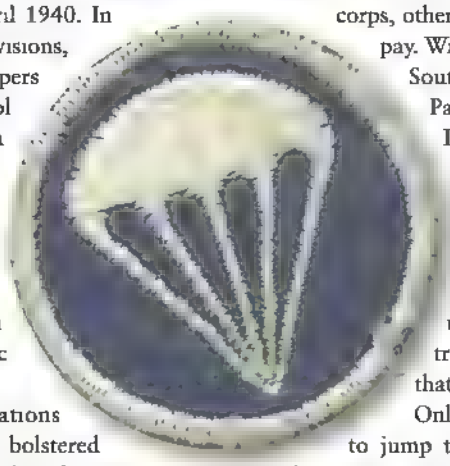
out of the SKIES

In the dark hours before Allied forces hit Normandy's shore, parachute and glider troops went to work behind enemy lines.

by Tom Huntington

THE ALLIED INVASION OF THE EUROPEAN MAINLAND ON D-DAY began in the skies, not on the beaches. In the darkness of the night of June 5–6, 1944, thousands of paratroopers of the American 82nd and 101st and the British 6th airborne divisions jumped out of airplanes or made bone-jarring landings in fragile gliders. Their mission: capture roads, causeways, and bridges to facilitate the Allied move inland and to help prevent German soldiers from reaching the invasion beaches.

It was a difficult assignment, and something of an experiment. Paratroop operations were still a fairly new concept for the US military. It had been only four years since the War Department approved a test platoon of 48 men in April 1940. In 1942 the army formed two parachute divisions, the 82nd and 101st. American paratroopers saw limited action in North Africa, and soldiers of the 82nd, under the command of a young colonel named James M. Gavin, spearheaded the Allied attack on Sicily. That operation underscored the potential hazards of airborne operations: high winds at the jump zone scattered paratroopers all over the island, while "friendly" fire from Allied naval forces played havoc with the second wave of their aircraft.



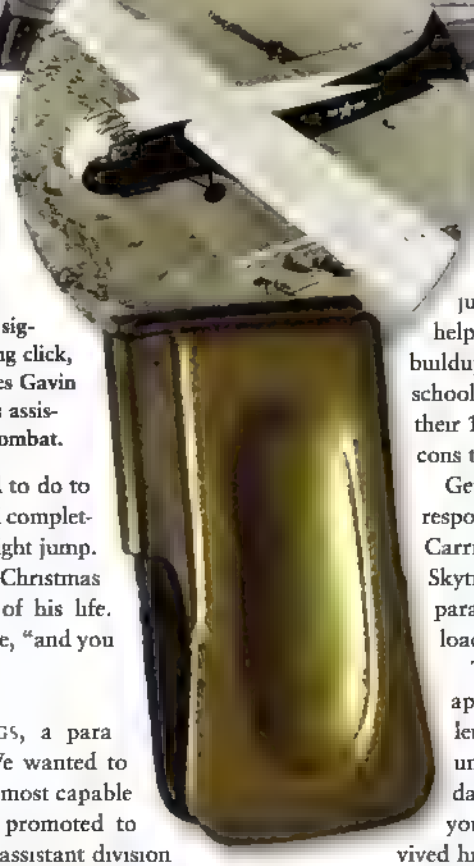
The effectiveness of parachute operations remained questionable. The record was bolstered somewhat by the 82nd's performance in Italy, where it supported American infantry at Salerno. But instead of parachuting in ahead of the invasion (as the Normandy D-Day plans would have them do), they were used to support beleaguered infantry.

There was no doubt that US paratroops were tough and well trained, even if the bulk of them remained untested in combat. They were all volunteers, some lured by the prospect of joining an elite corps, others by the promise of an extra $50 a month jump pay. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere was a tough kid from South Philadelphia when he joined the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. He was sent to Camp Toccoa, Georgia, for training. "Our training schedule was brutal," Guarnere wrote in a memoir. "Every day we did calisthenics, push-ups, pull-ups, a timed obstacle course. We climbed walls, through tubes, jumped hurdles. And we did it over and over until we could barely stand up." The goal, many trainees decided, was to make the training so bad that combat looked good in comparison.

Only the toughest, most determined men moved on to jump training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Like many other trainees, Guarnere had never been in an airplane before his first jump. "I wasn't scared at all," he wrote. "Not until after I jumped." Then he panicked, flailing about, trying to run through the air. His second jump was even worse. "But I wanted those

LEFT COURTESY OF THE CABA AMERICAN HERITAGE COLLECTION. OPPOSITE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Above: Wearing a parachute infantry patch on your cap carried prestige. It meant you had graduated from jump school, actually jumping out of planes. Opposite: With prestige came danger. These 101st Airborne paratroopers—faces blacked, equipment tied to their bodies, and one holding Eisenhower's "Great Crusade" letter (see page 5)—are on a C-47 bound for Normandy on June 5. They'll jump behind enemy lines before dawn.



Top left: Other airborne troops, like these, arrived in gliders. Top right: Paratroopers jumped from sturdy C-47 Skytrains (painted with D-Day invasion stripes, unlike this one). Right, top inset: Glider troops arrived, often with a crash, aboard unpowered cloth-and-wood Waco CG-4As. Right, lower inset: However they arrived, D-Day's airborne men were in the dark. They used metal crickets to signal their presence, hoping to hear an answering click, not gunfire. Opposite: Brigadier General James Gavin (seen as a major general), the 82nd Airborne's assistant commander, jumped on D-Day and led combat.

wings," he wrote. "I didn't care what I had to do to get them." Guarnere overcame his fears and completed the required five jumps and qualifying night jump. He won his coveted wings the day after Christmas 1942. He considered it the greatest day of his life. "Those wings made you different," he wrote, "and you never took them off."

EVEN AFTER WINNING HIS WINGS, a paratrooper's training continued. "We wanted to tell those guys that they were the most capable guys on earth," noted Gavin, who was promoted to brigadier general and served as the 82nd's assistant division commander. "And when they land, it doesn't matter who they meet; they can really lick them under any circumstance." The men needed to learn how to take care of themselves on the ground. They learned about weapons, hand signals, communications, and how to navigate in the dark. "You had to be ready for anything," Guarnere wrote. The paratroopers made practice jumps with heavier and heavier loads. They fired mortars and took part in war games. "We worked on night problems," remembered Edward "Babe" Effron, also of the 506th. "We had fifteen-mile hikes in full combat gear. Whatever had to be done in combat, we did it exactly the same way in training, and we did it over and over."

The men of the 101st reached Britain in the fall of 1943, and the 82nd shortly afterward, minus a regiment that remained in Italy. One thing learned from the experiences of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy was the necessity of pathfinders—men who would jump ahead of the main body of troops and help guide them to the jump zones. So, during the buildup to D-Day, volunteers attended pathfinder school in Lincolnshire, where they learned how their 18 man squads could use lights and radio beacons to signal the men who would follow them.

Getting the men to Normandy became the responsibility of the US Army Air Forces' IX Troop Carrier Command, which provided the C-47 Skytrain transport aircraft needed to carry the paratroopers and tow 104 CG-4A Waco gliders loaded with men and equipment.

The men who piloted the gliders were a breed apart. Jumping out of an airplane was a challenging assignment, but so was landing an unpowered aircraft in enemy territory in the dark. "You know the ground is down there, but you can't see it," wrote one glider pilot who survived his D-Day mission. "You don't know if you're going to hit trees, ditches, barns, houses, or what, and all this time the flak and tracers are coming up all around you." Unlike the jumpers, the men in the gliders had not volunteered for their roles.

As the Allied forces prepared to launch the Normandy Invasion, the airborne operations still appeared incredibly risky. "Either this 82nd Division job will be the most glorious and spectacular episode in our history," Gavin wrote in his diary at the end of May, "or it will be another Little Big Horn." Gavin would have his answer soon enough—he was jumping with his troops. ★

TOM HUNTINGTON *of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, is a contributing editor of* America in WWII.

ALL PHOTOS THIS SPREAD: NATIONAL ARCHIVES; CRICKET ARTIFACT COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION

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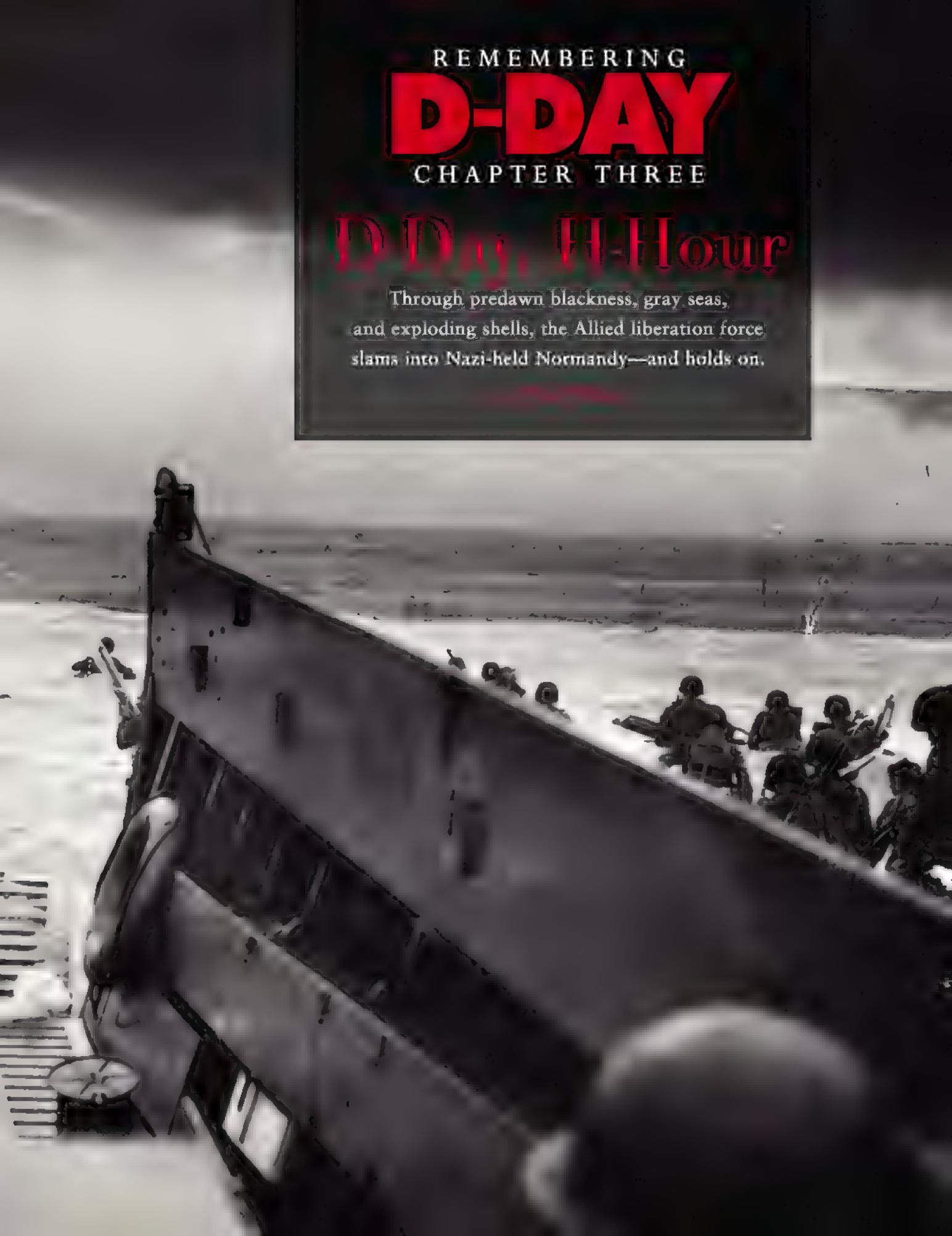


REMEMBERING

D-DAY

CHAPTER THREE

D-Day, H-Hour

Through predawn blackness, gray seas, and exploding shells, the Allied liberation force slams into Nazi-held Normandy—and holds on.

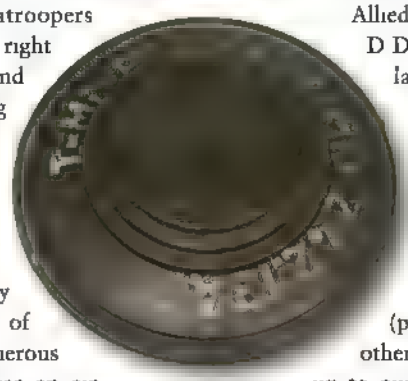
CHAPTER THREE • D-DAY, H-HOUR

ON A SUN-SPLASHED DAY IN APRIL 1944, a relaxed Erwin Rommel paused to consider an innocent-looking French meadow. "Wonderful, wonderful," he said. "If you come to think of it, under these flowers there are 80,000 mines." Now, Allied airmen were dropping into similarly deadly fields across Normandy.

At 12:15 A.M. on June 6, American airborne pathfinders stepped out of rumbling C-47 Skytrains into the black night sky, drifted to earth, and set out to mark landing zones in the lush, rugged French countryside. An hour behind them came a flock of 800 C-47s carrying the 13,000 paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions, the unseen van of the First Army invasion force. Swirling winds and colorful, zigzagging streams of anti-aircraft fire drove this second, main group of transport planes east, and the two divisions' six regiments of paratroopers landed widely scattered around a town called Sainte-Mère-Église.

Helped by intermittent moonlight and the glow of fires created by aerial bombing, the black-faced paratroopers regrouped and set out to secure the American right flank by capturing bridges, blocking roads, and generally raising hell among responding German units. Enough members of the 82nd had coalesced to capture the valuable Sainte-Mère Église crossroads by 4 A.M., when another 100 Skytrains lumbered overhead to loose rickety Waco gliders stuffed with airborne infantry, bulldozers, jeeps, and heavy weapons. Watching the hair-raising landings of the plywood and canvas gliders—and the numerous crashes that killed 25 pilots and soldiers—was an airborne officer sent to observe and then return to England with his report. "A boy I was with as we made our way to the coast so I could come back to Britain was shot in the leg," he said later, "but before he would allow it to be fixed he insisted he kill a German. He stormed a pillbox on the way to the beach so he could do it."

By 5:30 the ground was shuddering with the concussions of Eighth and Ninth Air Force bombs. The B-26 medium bombers and B-24 heavy bombers went unchallenged by German fighters, which remained far to the east. But hampered by poor visibility and faulty bombsights, the bombers released their payloads too late and left huge stretches of the western Atlantic Wall unscathed. Then, at 5:35, the big guns of Admiral Ramsay's 700-plus fighting ships leapt to life. It was a spectacular sight, but the cannonade proved inaccurate, especially at Omaha. Within seaside bunkers there, hardened veterans of the German 352nd Infantry Division waited it out while watching the seas for incoming targets.



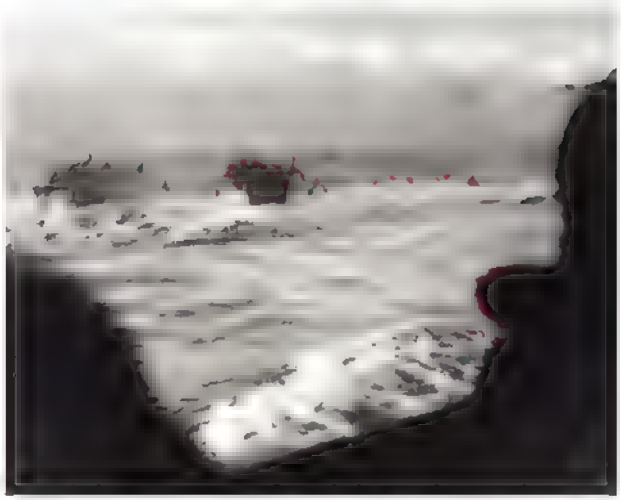
Allied planners had set H hour—the time of the first D Day landing—for 6:30 A.M. That would enable landing craft to deliver troops on a rising tide, but it was also late enough to allow demolitions men to go in first and attack the hideous booby traps beyond the reach of navy minesweepers. Just ahead of the lurking assault boats, navy frogmen and army combat engineers slipped shoreward to neutralize a mind-boggling jungle of steel tetrahedra, barbed wire, Element C (poles topped with mines or shells), and countless other bizarre obstacles. "We had to work with water up to our necks, sometimes higher," recalled one of the obstacle-removal men. "Then there were snipers. They were nipping us off. As I was working with two blokes on a tough bit of element, I suddenly found myself working alone. My two pals just gurgled and disappeared under water."

As the morning's first light spilled over a misty gray horizon,

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED), NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ARTIFACTS THIS PAGE, COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION

Previous spread: From inside a Higgins boat from USS *Samuel Chase (APA-26)*, coastguardsman Robert F. Sargent's camera watches veterans of Company E, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, wade toward smoky Omaha beach. It's the morning of June 6, 1944—D-Day. Protective plastic bags ripped from some of the men's rifles litter the boat's floor and ramp. Opposite: An aerial view puts D-Day's audacity in perspective. GIs swarm from landing craft up a narrow beach, as more landing craft queue up to land their troops. Other men are swimming ashore —or drowning. Big landing ships have moved as far as they dare into the shallows to offload tanks, vehicles, and troops. Above: Roads inland were full of antitank mines like this one, ready to annihilate Allied vehicles. Top: The US M1 helmet—like this one painted with a lieutenant's bar—was a huge improvement over the old doughboy helmet. But the M1 wasn't bulletproof, and rank markings helped snipers target officers.



Opposite: Led by an officer, GIs splash ashore on Omaha beach behind halftracks and DUKWs (the name is a factory code for a six-wheel-drive amphibious truck). In the distance, a line of troops moves toward high ground beyond the beach, aided by smoky artillery fire from US ships offshore. Above left: Facing the Americans on Omaha and Utah were fortified German artillery emplacements and machine-gun nests capable of hitting almost every inch of the beaches. This captured field gun position reveals the view German gunners had as the invasion came ashore. Above right: LCVPs (Higgins boats) motor toward Omaha beach.

the first wave of LCVPs accelerated through rolling waves. On the right, headed to Utah beach, was the 4th Division. Bouncing uncomfortably toward Omaha beach 12 miles to the east was the 1st Division, the famed Big Red One. Still farther east, the British 2nd Army would land roughly an hour later—Britain's 50th Infantry Division at Gold beach, Canada's 3rd Division at Juno beach, and Britain's own 3rd Infantry Division at Sword beach.

In their LCVPs, shifting nervously in six inches of vomit-topped seawater, Omar Bradley's First Army GIs joked about being in the attack's "suicide wave" and grumbled about the thinly armored, wide-mouthed Higgins boats hauling them toward German guns. "That son of a bitch Higgins," one unimpressed rifleman muttered as he watched another boat founder. "He hasn't got nothing to be proud of about inventing this boat."

At Utah, rushing crosscurrents forced assault craft more than a mile east of their plotted beaches—away, fortuitously, from shore batteries and onto quieter ground. Leading Overlord's heavy contingent of war correspondents ashore here was *Newsweek*'s Kenneth Crawford, who went in with Major General Raymond O. Barton's 4th Division. Crouching along the beach's seawall, Crawford watched as German 88mm guns firing from the east rained shells on Utah's edge. "Just in front of me a shell burst in a cluster of seven men," he later wrote. "Six crumpled, apparently dead. The seventh screamed in agonized amazement." Crawford helped the blast's lone survivor reach cover, then offered his help to Barton's second in command, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., the former president's sickly but tough son.

With the 4th Division's exit strategy scotched by the wayward landing on limited beaches, Roosevelt had a choice: hold the beach and try to organize the scattered command, or strike out over Utah's sloped dunes to try and link up with paratroopers. After conferring with regimental commanders, he chose the latter. All morning, men of the US 505th Parachute Regiment had held up superior German forces at Neuville au Plain (north of Sainte-Mère-Église), while their 82nd Airborne mates crept east. Headed the same way, through pockets of Germans, wicked hedgerows, and swamps, were 101st Airborne men looking for Utah. By mid-afternoon, the paratroopers had made contact with Roosevelt's advancing 4th Division. Utah was sealed.

On Omaha, a protected beach dominated by high bluffs, Rommel's 352nd Infantry Division welcomed the Big Red One with fire from fantastic encasements burrowed into the beach and heights. Hapless Higgins boats, drilled by German 75mm shore guns, disappeared in flashes of smoke and flying steel. Steeped in pre-invasion hype about how precision bombing would take out enemy guns before the beach landing, hundreds of GIs looked around, stunned—and then forced themselves forward into machine-gun fire that flew like rain blown sideways by hurricane winds. Knots of queasy soldiers clung to rusted steel and wrecked boats for shelter. "I was just coming out of the water when this guy exploded right in front of me," recalled a demolitions man. "There just wasn't anything left of him except some of his skin, which splattered all over my arm. I remember dipping my arm in the water to wash it off. I guess I was too excited to be scared." Soldiers arriving in later waves found a beach packed with stalled and disorganized units, and cringed at the sight of graves registration men, who went about their grim business of gathering corpses

Next spread: When the men of the 16th Infantry Regiment hit Omaha in the second assault wave, *Life* photographer Robert Capa was among them. Capa shot this photo of a GI in the surf and more than 100 other images. Then he nearly drowned struggling to get aboard a departing LCI. As the ship pulled away, German shells struck it. Instantly, Capa was covered with feathers. Looking around in horror, he realized "the feathers were the stuffing from the kapok jackets of the men that had been blown up. The skipper was crying. His assistant had been blown up all over him and he was a mess." The LCI limped back to England, where Capa's film was ruined in a darkroom. Only 11 images survived.

PHOTO BY ROBERT CAPA © 200 BY CORNELL CAPA, MAGNUM PHOTOS

D-DAY, H-HOUR • SIDE STORY

HIGGINS' LITTLE BOAT

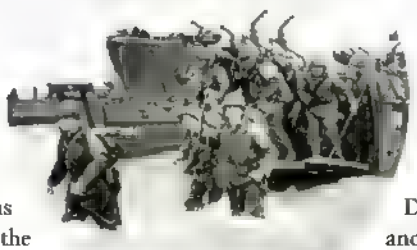
by Michael Edwards

AT THE INTERSECTION of Avenues I and Q in New Orleans' Metairie Cemetery lies the grave of Andrew Jackson Higgins. The cemetery is quiet. But in his prime, the man General Dwight Eisenhower credited with "winning the war for us" was not.

Higgins was a hard-drinking chain-smoker who battled government agencies, the navy, and labor unions to make military boats. Higgins Industries produced several different vessels for the war in its City Park Avenue plant a couple of miles from the cemetery. The company made the famous Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel—LCVP—the ubiquitous boat of D-Day. Servicemen knew it as the "Higgins boat."

Born and raised in Columbus, Nebraska, Higgins moved south to get into the lumber business. He used his own fleet to ship the lumber his company cut and to import timber from other countries. Soon boatbuilding became an outlet for his creative energies.

Besides pleasure craft, Higgins designed and built a workboat for south Louisiana's bayous. Its innovative stern featured a propeller housed in a tunnel to protect it and reduce the vessel's draft, so it could navigate shallow waters. There was a flaw, though: air pockets formed around the propeller, reducing propulsion.



Higgins's shallow-draft boats proved valuable during 1927's Great Mississippi Flood, when the levee system broke in 145 places. For the US Army Corps of Engineers, two Higgins boats joined by a platform became an efficient transport for heavy equipment in flooded areas.

Higgins began building workboats for the corps, but also for trappers, oil workers, bootleggers, poachers—anyone who needed small vessels that could penetrate south Louisiana's marshes and waterways. His tunnel-stern design evolved into the popular Wonderboat.

Air pockets still plagued the Wonderboat—until a worker made a fortuitous mistake. On the molding floor, two metal plates slid out of place, changing the hull's shape. In testing, the curved shape forced water to flow differently around the propeller. The problem was gone.

Next came a new bow. Higgins traded the conventional rounded front for a pine slab dotted with wooden pegs and doused with marine glue for durability. This reinforced bow made the new boat—the Eureka—able to run over obstacles, push through vegetation, and ground itself with little to no damage. The new design also allowed tighter turns and greater maneuverability.

The Eureka was an instant success, and Higgins pitched it to the navy. It was a tough sell. But the Eureka outshone every other landing craft in fleet training exercises in the late 1930s. By 1940 it was the military's standard landing craft.

The evolution continued. A key design change came courtesy of marine Captain Victor H. Krulak. In China, Krulak observed a wooden Japanese landing craft with a bow that converted into a loading ramp. On the water, the bottom hinged door latched closed at the top. Ashore, the door unlatched to create a ramp. Krulak forwarded a photo and report to the navy's bureau of ships. Stuffed in a file, they were pulled out for a meeting with Higgins in early 1941. Krulak and Major Ernest Linsert, the marines' equipment board secretary, showed Higgins the photo and challenged him to produce a Eureka with a bow ramp.

The new boat was ready in May 1941. Linsert returned with Commander Ross Daggett, representing the bureau of ships, and put three test models through their paces on Lake Pontchartrain. The inspection team ran a truck on and off the craft and watched 36 Higgins employees embark and disembark. Linsert reported the boat's merits to marine headquarters and recommended further tests.

The modified Eureka—the Landing Craft, Personnel (Ramped)—passed its final test, and Higgins got a contract. More modifications followed, particularly the elimination of two forward crew positions to widen the ramp. This improved model was the LCVP.

The LCVP held 36 men in full combat gear, allowing most of a platoon to travel as a unit. The craft could also carry small vehicles or cargo. It had a crew of three, mounted two .30-caliber machine guns, and could be carried on an assault transport ship.

Almost 1,100 LCVPs operated on D-Day. The little boat from Louisiana became an icon of history's greatest amphibious invasion. ★

MICHAEL EDWARDS *writes from New Orleans.*

Above: Stepping off a Higgins boat into Normandy's surf days after the initial assault, reinforcements land without enemy fire.

COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION

American airborne infantry was still in its infancy, but D-Day's paratroops were trained and equipped for anything that confronted them. This jump jacket was worn by a 101st Airborne paratrooper on D-Day. Shown with it are: a Schrade-Walden switchblade, kept in a breast pocket and secured by a lanyard, in case the paratrooper got hung up on a tree or building and needed to cut himself free; an M1 Garand cartridge belt; a cricket for signaling other paratroopers after landing in the dark; and an M1 carbine with a folding stock.

with almost spectral indifference to the violence surrounding them.

To get armor to the beaches quickly, engineers had developed the DD (duplex drive) tank, an amphibious Sherman M 4 modified with a propeller and would be waterproof curtain. Dispatched from ships several miles out in heavy seas, however, 27 of the 32 DDs destined for Omaha foundered and sank.

By late morning, Omaha was a mechanical graveyard full of stranded men. "The sands were olive covered, with masses of American soldiers," testified CBS radio man Larry Meier. "Every once in a while an officer or a non-com would wave, and a little group would crawl forward, shooting." By noon, on the bridge of the *Augusta*, General Bradley was considering evacuating Omaha's survivors and diverting reinforcements elsewhere.

BLOODIED AND DISHEARTENED, the Americans nonetheless inched forward, one enemy strongpoint and one dead German at a time. Sergeant Mike McKinney of the 16th Infantry set an example early on, rallying enough men to take out a hilltop pillbox with clocklike precision. He later recounted the method: "The flamethrower gets up. The satchel charge guy. The bangalore torpedoes go off. The guys go up with the satchel charges, they blow the apertures off. The flamethrower goes in...." Blowing the lid off this dugout earned McKinney's makeshift squad 20 prisoners (and McKinney a welcome captured can of tuna fish). Others followed suit, filtering through gaps in wire and rock blown open by engineers, then mounting the heights from the rear to turn the tables on surprised defenders.

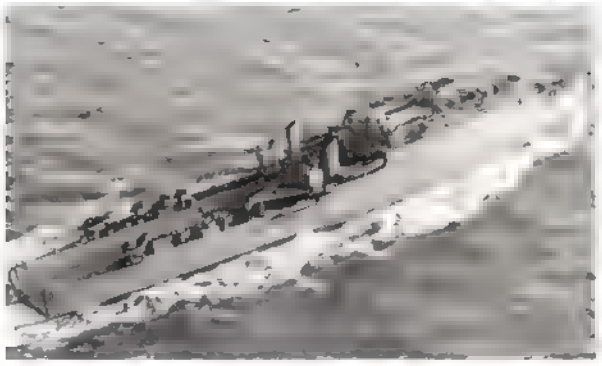
The men on Omaha got crucial help from the US Navy. Lunging ashore to trade fresh troops for wounded, LCIs answered German fire with their machine guns. Singly, then in force, destroyers crept within 1,100 yards to blast pillboxes with their five-inch guns. "Get on them, men! Get on them!" Rear Admiral C.F. Bryant roared. "They are raising hell with the men on the beach, and we can't have any more of that! We must stop it!"

All afternoon the navy guns let loose, knocking enemy-filled chunks of concrete and earth from Omaha's cliffs. The battleships *Texas* and *Arkansas* threw in with their 14- and 12-inch guns as British Spitfire fighters cruising overhead directed their fire. Despite everything the Allies hurled at them, however, diehards of

LANDING SHIPS AND LANDING CRAFTS OF D-DAY

More than a dozen types of US and British ships and craft carried men, machines, and firepower onto Normandy's beaches on D-Day. Here are some of the most commonly seen landing vessels of the great invasion.

LST • Landing Ship, Tank
Carried: vehicles (including tanks), cargo, troops, landing craft
Capacity: about 163 men and about 12–20 tanks, with about 30 trucks or 2–6 landing craft on deck, or combinations. Also carried pontoons for barge- or causeway-building
Operators: USA, UK, Canada



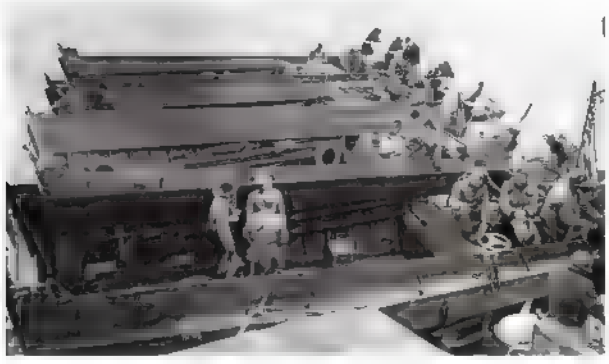
LSD • Landing Ship, Dock
Carried: landing craft; when unloaded, served as offshore repair dock
Capacity: 240 men and either 2 LCT(3)s or LCT(4)s carrying 12 tanks each, 3 LCT(5)s or LCT(6)s carrying 5 tanks each, 14 LCMs carrying 1 tank each or cargo, 41 LVTs, 47 DUKWs, assorted vehicles, or combinations of these
Operators: UK

LSI • Landing Ship, Infantry
Carried: troops and landing craft
Capacity: depending on size, these converted English Channel ferries carried 800–1,800 men and up to 20 landing craft
Operators: UK

LCT(5, 6) • Landing Craft, Tank, Mark 5 and 6
Carried: tanks, vehicles, cargo
Capacity: 3–5 tanks, 9 trucks, or 136 tons of cargo
Operators: USA, UK

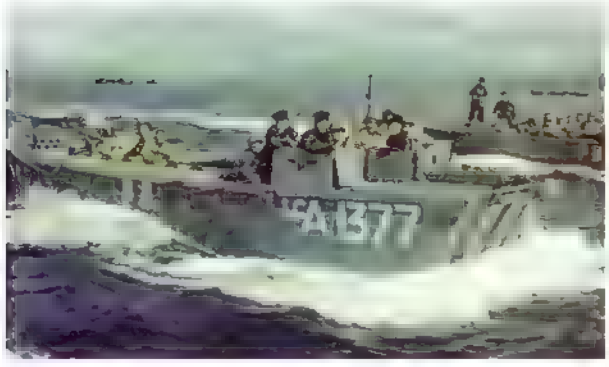
LCI(L) • Landing Craft, Infantry, Large
Carried: troops; variants served as gunboats (G), rocket boats (R), mortar boats (M), or flotilla flagships (FF)
Capacity: 180–210 men
Operators: USA, UK, Canada

LCP(L) • Landing Craft, Personnel (Large)
Carried: troops
Capacity: 25 men (British model) to 36 men (US model)
Operators: USA, UK, Canada



LCVP • Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel (Higgins boat)
Carried: troops, vehicles, cargo
Capacity: 36 men, one vehicle, or 8,100 pounds of cargo
Operators: USA

LCM(3) • Landing Craft, Mechanized, Mark 3
Carried: tanks, troops, cargo
Capacity: 1 tank, 60 men, or 60,000–120,000 pounds of cargo, depending on variant
Operators: USA, UK



LCA • Landing Craft, Assault
Carried: troops, cargo; variants served as LCS(M) support vessels with machine guns and smoke mortars, LCA(HR) Hedgehog mortar battery boats, and in other roles
Capacity: 36 men or up to 800 pounds of cargo
Operators: UK, Canada

DUKW (six-wheel-drive amphibious truck)
Carried: troops, cargo
Capacity: 12 men or 2.3 tons of cargo
Operators: USA, UK, Canada

On Utah beach, GIs of the 4th Infantry Division's 8th Infantry Regiment take a breather against the shoreline's concrete seawall, where enemy fire can't hit them. After a brief rest, they will have to climb over the wall and head uphill and inland. Taller seawalls on Omaha beach and the Canadian Juno beach were dangerous obstacles for troops struggling to move inland. Crossing the walls exposed men to enemy fire.

the German 352nd Division (whose commander had inexplicably claimed complete victory by 1:30 P.M.) still lurked at nightfall. The 1st Division held Omaha—but just barely.

THINGS HAD GONE BETTER in the British sector. Thudding to the ground in Horsa gliders just after midnight, Major John Howard and a British 6th Airborne Division detachment seized bridges over the Orne River and Caen Canal. The balance of the division's 7,000 paratroopers arrived shortly after 1 A.M., and a handful of them captured a threatening coastal battery at Merville. Other units cut off German approaches from the east by taking out bridges over the Dives River. With Sword and a direct route inland all but secured, the 6th prepared to hold against counterattack.

Going ashore between 7:00 and 8:00, the British 2nd Army had found spotty German defenses. On the western edge of Gold beach, Rommel's troublesome 352nd Division shredded one British regiment before falling back. And Canadians nearly stalled

COSMOLINE and CORDITE

by Kristen Carmen

IF YOU REMEMBER the big band tune "Tangerine," then you may also remember the adaptation US Marines sang during World War II's Pacific island campaigns: "Cosmoline…keeps my rifle clean."

Cosmoline was a vital player in D-Day's amphibious landings. The greasy, petroleum jelly-like substance coated guns, tanks, equipment, and vehicles to waterproof them. Moving parts and other vulnerable areas were covered with it to keep out seawater, which could sink or rust heavy machines.

"Cosmoliners" were US Coast Artillerymen, who were forever applying Cosmoline to their exposed guns. Called "greasing down," this same process was used to prepare guns for D Day. When removed—with rags, typically—Cosmoline left only a thin film behind. The miracle goo had one shortcoming: it reeked of gasoline.

Even with Cosmoline in abundance, getting tanks, trucks, halftracks, and jeeps off landing craft, through seawater, and onto shore—ready for action—was a challenge. Rubberized cloth, rubber cement, and flexible tubing joined Cosmoline in the waterproofing arsenal. Exhaust pipes and air intakes had to be prevented from gulping water, and that required snorkel like tubing pointed skyward.

Once ashore, GIs needed a quick way to remove the pipes, tubes, patches, and glop. Cordite—a smokeless explosive powder made from nitroglycerin, guncotton, and petroleum, pressed into cords resembling brown twine—provided the solution. Cordite was wrapped around waterproofed areas and exhaust pipes on jeeps, tanks, and trucks, and connected by a wire. Once a vehicle made it to shore the cordite was detonated, blowing off the waterproofing with a bang.

Eric Downing, a Brit of B Squadron, 22nd Dragoons, 30th Armoured Brigade, arrived on Juno beach aboard a Sherman Crab tank (with flails to destroy mines). After landing, remembers Downing, "there was a blinding flash and the turret filled with smoke. I thought that was the end of us but the commander had given orders to blow the cordite to remove the waterproofing on the tank." ☆

KRISTEN CARMEN *of Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, is* America in WWII*'s spring 2014 editorial intern.*

Above: In addition to waterproofing vehicles and weapons, GIs protected personal items against seawater. These members of Company E, 5th Ranger Battalion—waiting in a landing craft in Weymouth, England, for transport to the ship in which they'll cross the channel—show off what looks like a waterproofed carton of cigarettes, perhaps Lucky Strikes like the ones at the left of the photo.

amid underwater mines and galling fire on Juno beach. Generally, however, German waterside defenses along these beaches proved comparatively light, and by midday, elements of all three British divisions had advanced several miles inland.

Though still convinced the Allied assault was a feint, a surprised German Field Marshal von Rundstedt had put the tanks of the 12th SS Panzer Division and Panzer Division Lehr on alert shortly after 5 A.M., then phoned his superiors to request using them. Colonel General Alfred Jodl refused him. Across Germany, meanwhile, radio news of the invasion drifted out courtesy of the DNB News Agency: "The great contest between the Reich and the Anglo-Americans has begun. The Allied landing in the west today has put the German armed forces in a mood which they express with the laconic: 'They are coming.'"

Poised south of Juno and Sword, elements of the 21st Panzer struck out against the British 6th Airborne, then disengaged to contest a Sword breakout. By mid-afternoon, however, British armor was waiting north of Caen to shatter a spirited attack by 60 second-rate German tanks. As darkness fell, a single German regiment (the 192nd Panzer Grenadier) sneaked through to the coast between Sword and Juno. But a mix-

Above: A wounded GI hugs a carton of smokes as medics lift him onto a Higgins boat for evacuation. Right: One way men and machines went ashore and back was by rhino, or landing barge. Here, a tank and trucks board a rhino from an LST (Landing Ship, Tank) early on D-Day.

up soon forced it to withdraw. At 3 P.M., Hitler grudgingly authorized the advance of the 12th SS Panzer and Panzer Lehr divisions—too late to seriously threaten the Allied toehold.

About 6 P.M. on D-Day, a crestfallen Rommel reached his Normandy headquarters after an all-day drive. He immediately requested permission to transfer the 15th Army westward, toward the invasion area, and was denied. German reinforcements would remain at Calais, awaiting an attack that would never come. ★

US
21

D-DAY'S MASSIVE INVASION WAS a gigantic traffic problem. Thousands upon thousands of men and machines headed for the same relatively small patches of real estate. And enemy fire made it hard to get one group off the beach before the next arrived. What kept everything from dissolving into chaos was the invasion's traffic police, the navy beach battalions. Pictured here during a practice on the English coast is the 7th Navy Beach Battalion—USN 7, as the men's helmets say. These are navy men, though they're attached to an army amphibious engineer unit, wear army fatigues, and use army equipment. The man in charge is the beachmaster, wearing an armband with a B on it. He is the last word on who and what goes where on his stretch of beach, from the surf to the high-water mark. The beachmaster is using a radio to communicate with ships and beach communication posts. Behind him, at the photo's center, a battalion member flashes a message to a vessel offshore with a blinker light. The men flanking him hold semaphore flags for signaling landing craft and other beach team members. The men are armed, because they must work under fire. On D-Day, the 7th Beach Battalion will help the 29th Division come ashore on the west side of Omaha beach.

REMEMBERING
D-DAY
D-DAY, H-HOUR • SIDE STORY
BEACH OPERATIONS
Getting a division ashore fast enough to make a difference required teams
of highly trained navy men who connected ships and shore

D-DAY, H-HOUR
DESTROY

ER D-DAY

As GIs splashed ashore under fire on Omaha Beach, artillerymen aboard the USS *Carmick* and other US destroyers took out German gun nests to help clear the way.

STUNNED AMERICAN INFANTRYMEN were pinned down on Omaha Beach. Booming German coastal guns and lead-spitting machine-gun nests studded the cliffs before them. In the tumbling sea behind them, navy gunships struggled to hit invisible targets with rockets. With few tanks on Omaha's exposed sands, knots of desperate GIs looked around and wondered how they would ever get off the beach.

American destroyer commanders were pondering the same thing. Though lightly armored and modestly armed, their ships, known as "tin cans," were as tough as the men who crewed them. Their quickness and versatility suited them to all sorts of dangerous assignments, and after 30 months of war, the US Navy had given them plenty. Now, off the shores of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, their naturally aggressive commanding officers would get a chance to add to their fighting reputations with startling new boldness.

The value of destroyers had first been made clear during World War I, amid the Allies' life-and-death struggle against German U-boats. To protect their vulnerable troop transports and supply ships, British and American naval forces installed a destroyer-based convoy system based on new tactics and technology. A generation later, however, the advent of a two-ocean war—against Germany's reconstituted *Kriegsmarine* ("War Navy") in the Atlantic-Mediterranean area and the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Pacific—had magnified the American destroyer's importance.

In the years immediately preceding World War II, the US Navy had launched several new classes of destroyers. America's

Previous spread: American soldiers pour from LCIs (Landing Crafts, Infantry) into the Omaha Beach killing zone at Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944. *LCI-553* (center) was struck later by 88mm shells and wound up a wreck. Opposite: USS *Carmick* gunners hammered German positions during the D-Day landings and remained intact herself when this photo was taken the following day. Above: At Normandy and elsewhere, Allied naval forces leaned heavily on destroyers, whose speed earned them the moniker "greyhounds of the sea." Here, destroyers escort aircraft carriers bound for the invasion of southern France in August.

December 1941 entry into the war spurred the development of still more. With dollars scarce, their low price tag and growing numbers soon put them in the paths of bigger and faster enemy ships by the score. Many of them, such as the USS *Carmick (DD-493)* of the *Bristol* class, would travel a long and varied path to Normandy.

Built by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation, the *Carmick* was commissioned in December 1942 and joined Destroyer Squadron 18 (Desron 18) of the US Atlantic Fleet the following March. With a length of 348 feet and a width of 36 feet, Commander W.S. Whiteside's slim new warship boasted four five-inch guns and an assortment of torpedoes, anti-aircraft guns, and depth charges. She carried 208 officers and sailors and could crank her speed up to 35 knots.

From her station at Norfolk, Virginia, *Carmick* immediately entered the convoy business, escorting supply ships north to Canada and east to North Africa. After striking a submerged object in heavy fog in June 1943, and undergoing four months of repairs, she helped guide a convoy to Ireland before reporting to the Caribbean Sea. There she served with the escort group screening for the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet (CV-12)*, the impressive new replacement for the carrier of the same name sunk during the October 1942 Battle of Santa Cruz

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Late April 1944 found the *Carmick*, with 34-year-old Commander Robert O. Beer now at its helm, and the balance of Desron 18 at Weymouth, England, sharing berthing space with the British destroyers *Melbreak*, *Talybont*, and *Tanatside*. By now, the launch of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Nazi occupied France, was just weeks away. Amid airtight secrecy, these ships joined thousands of others preparing for their roles in it.

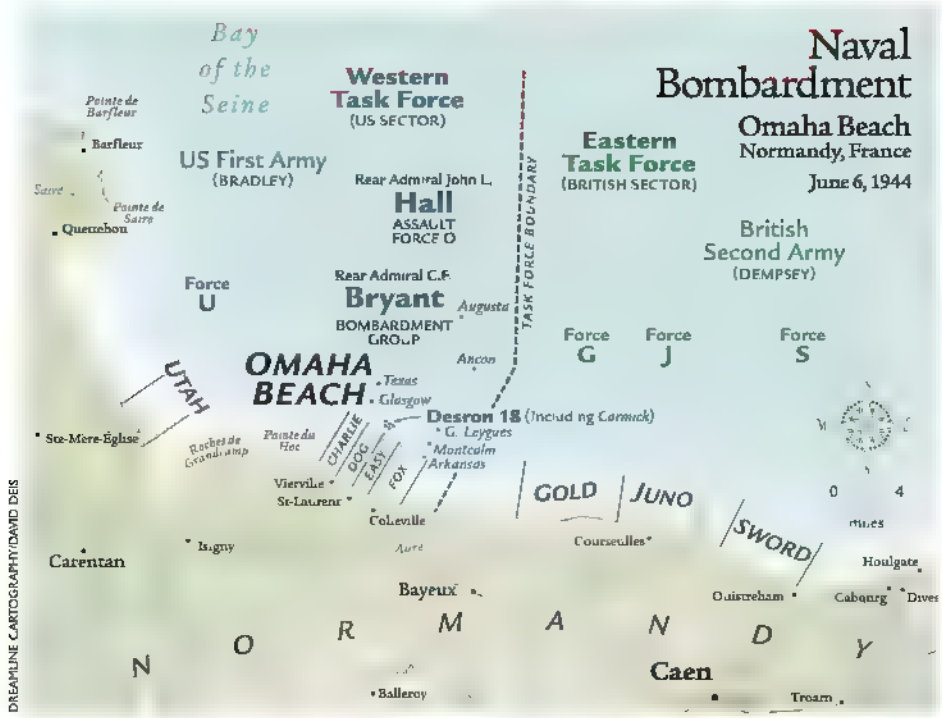
On April 28, a stunning German attack on a training convoy near Slapton Sands, just off England's southern coast, reinforced the need for proven escorts such as the *Carmick*. During a pre-invasion drill called Exercise Tiger, a quick-striking force of nine German E-boats (fast torpedo boats) waded into a group of eight Allied LSTs (Landing Ships, Tank)—transports known by their crews as Long, Slow, Targets—burning *LST-507*, sinking *LST-531*, and damaging *LST-289*. More than 700 American sailors and soldiers died, and the disaster sent worries rippling through the Allied command that the Germans had sniffed out the Overlord plan.

Still, five days later, American ships were back at Slapton Sands, where Task Group 124 was conducting Operation Fabius, a landing and fire-support exercise. In it, Desron 18 sharpened its skills in patrolling and securing sea lanes and worked with shore fire-control personnel. After departing to shepherd nine transports to Scotland, the *Carmick* and her sister ships returned once more to Slapton Sands to train in shore bombardment, practice that would soon come in handy. On May 12 *Carmick* and the USS *Endicott* escorted an ammunition ship to Greenock, Scotland. The balance of the squadron soon joined them there for additional training with joint army navy shore fire-control parties. The work included training to battle E boats, firing at towed aerial targets to sharpen anti aircraft skills, and additional bombardment drills.

THE *CARMICK* AND HER SISTER DESTROYERS were back in Weymouth Bay at 1:00 A.M. on May 28, when *Luftwaffe* aircraft raided Portland. Shore guns fired on the enemy planes, but the American destroyers remained silent—one of many drastic steps being taken to prevent the Germans from discovering any hints about the coming assault. Already, sailors were sequestered on board their vessels, and army personnel were stuffed into tightly guarded coastal staging areas known as "sausage camps" for their shape when depicted on maps.

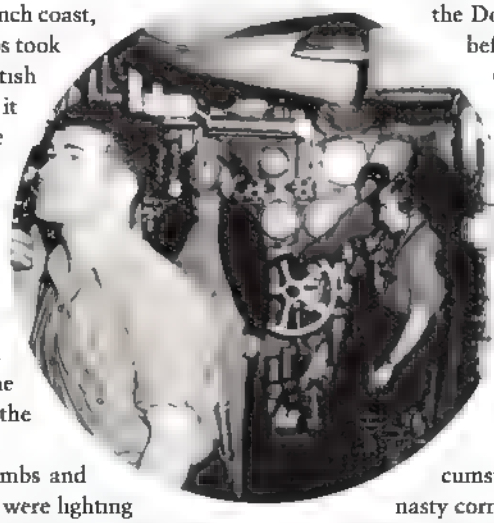
In Operation Neptune, the naval element of Overlord, Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk's Western Task Force (Task Force 122) would carry General Omar Bradley's US First Army. One portion, Task Force 125, would head to Utah Beach as Assault Force U. The other, Task Force 124—or Assault Force O, including Desron 18—was bound for Omaha Beach. Under Rear Admiral John L. Hall, Assault Force O would support General L.T. Gerow's V Army Corps, featuring the veteran 1st Infantry Division, the 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions, and the 29th Infantry Division. The Omaha beachhead stretched roughly five miles from Utah in the west—the second American landing zone—to Britain's Gold Beach in the east (beyond which lay British-directed Juno and Sword beaches).

After lingering rough weather forced a one-day postponement, the invasion forces sailed south on June 5 into an English Channel littered with an untold number of floating mines, both German and Allied. That meant delicate work for destroyers such as *Carmick*, *McCook*, and *Satterlee*, which served as escorts for the



British ships of Minesweeping Flotilla 4. The *Carmick*'s deck log recorded that "it was felt that mines constituted the greatest danger to both the minesweepers and destroyers." On the other hand, it continued, the "presence of the mines made the encountering of German submarines very unlikely."

AS THE FLEET NEARED the French coast, *Carmick* and her sister ships took up escort duty for British Minesweeping Flotilla 167, whose job it was to sweep the near-shore portion of the fire support channel for bombarding ships off Omaha Beach. Specifically, *Carmick* was to serve as "anti E boat escort, and to protect sweepers from enemy shore battery if necessary," according to the ship log. Despite all the precautions, mines claimed the first Allied naval casualty of Operation Neptune, the American minesweeper *Osprey*, on the evening of June 5.



By 3:40 A.M. on June 6, exploding bombs and zipping German anti aircraft tracer shells were lighting up the dark sky above Normandy. "This display of bombing was a great morale factor to the entire ship's personnel," the *Carmick*'s log noted. But as crews aboard the 18 ships of the Assault Force O bombardment group were about to discover, the predawn air assault would scarcely soften German defenses at Omaha Beach.

Rear Admiral C.F. Bryant's bombardment group packed plenty of punch: the battleships *Texas* and *Arkansas*, a group of British and French cruisers, and a dozen American destroyers, including the *Carmick*, *McCook*, and *Thompson*. These three were assigned to cover the landings along Omaha's western beaches, the Dog beaches—Green, White, and Red. Shortly before 5:50 A.M., Beer announced over the *Carmick*'s intercom, "Now hear this! This is probably going to be the biggest party you boys will ever go to—so let's all get out on the floor and dance!" Then, Bryant's poised ships opened fire. Observers on the *Carmick* saw the first wave of troops hitting Omaha Beach at 6:45 A.M. The *Carmick*'s log noted that the ship came under fire two minutes later, then "German Shore Battery silenced by Main Battery of this ship. No damage resulting from enemy fire."

At Omaha, a nightmarish combination of circumstances soon produced a near disaster. This nasty corner of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel's imposing Atlantic Wall boasted high bluffs packed with a dizzying array of camouflaged, virtually unpregnable concrete bunkers and pillboxes. Inside them, German crews manned heavy naval guns,

Above: In the USS *Carmick*'s engine room on June 6, 1944, sailors man their battle stations, giving their ship power to support the Omaha Beach landings. The destroyer pounded concrete German gun positions on shore at close range with 1,127 five-inch shells. Opposite: During the sort of down time that didn't exist on D-Day, members of the crew of *Carmick*'s five-inch gun No. 1 pose for the camera.

artillery pieces, and anti tank guns. Elsewhere, rocket-launching sites, mortar pits, and an astounding 85 machine-gun nests sited with interlocking fields of fire dotted the ground commanding Omaha's sands. The defenders included men of Germany's 352nd Infantry Division, a veteran outfit on whose presence senior American commanders had not counted.

NEUTRALIZING ENOUGH ENEMY HOTSPOTS to help the infantry access the beachhead's few exit routes inland required heavy firepower, the kind of lengthy pre-assault naval barrage that was, unfortunately, unsuited to a surprise attack. Allied planners had expected precise air attacks and fast-arriving armor to pulverize many of these sites. But most of the bombs loosed along Omaha's coastline had dropped far inland. And the bulk of the army's specially designed duplex-drive Sherman tanks, outfitted with canvas skirts and propellers to allow navigation across the water, disappeared in the heavy channel surf

Splashing ashore, horrified troops of the 29th Division's 116th Infantry (temporarily attached to the 1st Division) and the 1st Division's 16th Infantry on their left flank quickly discovered that the torrent of exploding steel thrown at German defenses had failed to bury them. The ships of Assault Force O now did their best to make up for that. Beneath ominously gray skies, the *Carmick*, for instance, fired at sites "over practically the whole of Omaha beach," the ship log noted, where drifting smoke and early morning haze forced landing craft off course to deposit confused troops on the wrong beaches. Severed communications between ships and fire-control parties ashore cost infantrymen desperately needed naval gunfire support. The *Carmick*, which would make contact with her own shore party just twice during the entire day, lost touch with the unit shortly after 8:10 A.M. Eerily, the spotters' radio switch had jammed, inadvertently providing the destroyer's shipboard communications men with a play-by-play of the desperate situation on shore. "Their remarks were quite detailed and to the point," Beer recalled. "We could also hear the whine of enemy machine-gun bullets over their foxhole, which they were rapidly digging deeper. Their situation was certainly appreciated by the men listening to the SCR 608 receiver in C.I.C. [combat information center], but unfortunately there was nothing we could do to help them."

The soldiers on Omaha's chaotic beaches needed heavy naval gunfire support from in close. Heavy bottomed battlewagons were unsuited to that kind of point blank, precision blasting. And the nine rocket shooting LCT(R)s—Landing Crafts, Tank (Rocket)—on hand to provide such fire proved ineffective. For lighter but thin-skinned multi-tasking destroyers, it was possible, but potentially suicidal. Still, Bryant implored his charges to meet the challenge: "Get on them, men! Get on them! They're raising hell with the men on the beach, and we can't have any more of that! We must stop it!" The *McCook* crept to within 1,300 yards of shore and let loose with her five-inch guns. Pushing his luck, Beer ordered *Carmick* to get "as close to the beach as safe navigation and traffic would allow"—a scant 900 yards—and did the same. The *Doyle*, *Emmons*, and numerous others followed close behind,

Above: From a mile offshore, heavy German coastal gun emplacements (like this one, scorched by GIs moving inland on June 15, a week after D-Day, at Foucarville) were virtually impossible to spot. That made them difficult targets for naval artillery tasked with softening up enemy defenses before an invasion. Opposite: For several tense hours on D-Day, the logjam at Omaha beach threatened to stall the entire Allied assault. Once it was cleared, however, US Coast Guard-manned transports were free to empty their vast holds of supplies.

targeting German guns wherever they could be discovered.

Plagued all day by busted communications, Desron 18 commanders stepped up their improvisation. Cued by tanks firing at cliff side targets above Exit D-1, the road from Green Beach to the town of Vierville, *Carmick* opened up on the same sites until they fell silent. The destroyer and tankers subsequently teamed up in a sort of "silent cooperation" to obliterate a series of additional obstacles. Beer's ship even used the rifle fire of infantry pinned behind a beachside house as a target reference, then neatly deposited shells that cleared a path forward. Meanwhile, his ship's log recorded, "an enemy medium caliber gun was so placed that it would command the length of Dog Beach and was intermittently firing into the landing craft." For half an hour *Carmick* raced to pound every possible location of that gun. The gun eventually stopped firing.

With the situation on Omaha Beach still in doubt by late morning, General Omar Bradley began mulling something drastic: closing the Omaha beaches and diverting his second wave of troops, the balance of the 29th Division, to the other four main beaches (Juno, Sword, Utah, Gold). The massive invasion force was balancing on a carefully timed schedule. With thousands more troops and endless amounts of equipment due to come in behind it, any serious delays could turn the cluttered beaches into a virtual maelstrom and buy the Germans time to reinforce.

But progress was being made. In the early afternoon, in concert with the USS *Frankford* under Captain Harry Sanders, commander of Desron 18, the *Carmick* took aim at a strong point on Fox Green (a beach to the east). The destroyers' combined blasts silenced the area and allowed relieved American troops to charge ahead and take a number of prisoners. Staying dangerously close to shore, Sanders's destroyers steamed up and down the Omaha beaches, exposing their thin hulls to sizzling German naval guns and their keels to the obstacle-strewn shoreline. With increasing frequency, five-inch shells found their marks, cracking open the bluff's rock hard encasements and laying waste German guns and their unwitting crews.

The uptick in accurate fire boosted the remarkable efforts of infantrymen on the beach. Scrambling in small knots off the death-filled beach flats, they fought their way up Omaha's rugged heights to challenge German defenders in bunkers and pillboxes. Late-arriving Sherman tanks loudly announced their presence, hammering the cliffs and clearing blocked beach exits through which relieved GIs streamed. And while the ubiquitous destroyers continued to pepper the heights, 12- and 14 inch shells loosed by the hulking *Texas* and *Arkansas* slammed into the earth—and into German units—beyond.

By 1:00 P.M., HARD-PRESSED German troops atop the bluffs were beginning to withdraw or surrender. By mid afternoon, the immediate danger on Omaha Beach had passed. Bradley's patience was rewarded as beach traffic cleared and his follow-up waves poured ashore. By day's end, the Allies had gained a foothold on Nazi-occupied France, the first step in a colossal effort to sweep German forces from occupied Europe.

Later, after D Day's success was assured, Colonel S.B. Mason, the 1st Division's chief of staff, wrote to Hall: "I am now firmly convinced that our supporting naval gunfire got us in; that without that gunfire we positively could not have crossed the beaches." The sharpest, riskiest, and timeliest of that fire was the doorstep blasting done by the *Carmick* and her sister ships. Best known for their willingness to take on all comers, they set a new standard at Omaha Beach. ★

MICHAEL EDWARDS *writes from New Orleans, where US Marine Corps Major Daniel Carmick, for whom the destroyer* Carmick *was named, fought during the War of 1812 and suffered a head wound that eventually killed him.*

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OTHER BEACHES, OTHER ALLIES

by Jim Kushlan

NOT ALL OF D-DAY'S HEROES were Americans, of course. While the US First Army battled across beaches codenamed Utah and Omaha, other Allied troops fought fiercely on Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches (see map, pages 32–33), constituting a massive part of the Allied force.

They were the troops of Lieutenant General Miles Dempsey's British 2nd Army, more than 83,000 in all, almost three-quarters of whom were British. The remaining men were mostly Canadians, with Australians, French, Belgians, Czechs, Greeks, Dutch, New Zealanders, Norwegians, and Poles in the mix.

Below, beach by beach, are the British 2nd Army units that participated in the invasion, with synopses of each beach's action. The beaches are listed from west to east (Allied right to Allied left).

Gold Beach

Invasion Force: 25,000 men. 50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Division with attached 8th Armoured Brigade and No. 47 (Royal Marine) Commando (from 4th Special Service Brigade). Also integrated were Hobart's Funnies, specialized tanks of 79th Armoured Division.

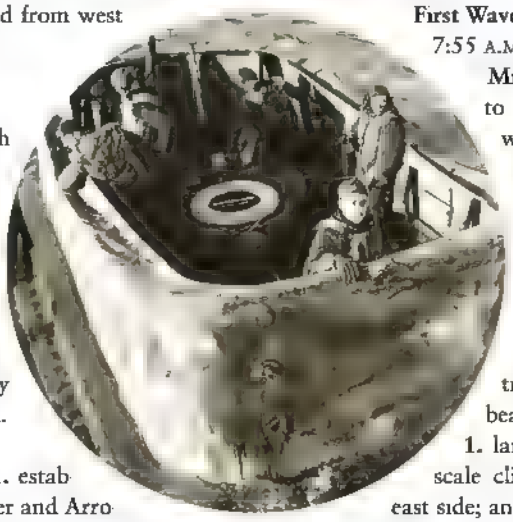
Opposition: German 716th Infantry Division and 352nd Infantry Division.

First Wave on Beach: 7:25 A.M.

Missions: 50th Division was to **1.** establish a beachhead between Ver-sur-Mer and Arromanches in preparation for installation of a Mulberry artificial harbor; **2.** move inland and cut the road to Caen near Bayeux; and **3.** connect with Canadian troops on neighboring Juno beach. No. 47 (RM) Commando was to **1.** move inland, turn west (right), and attack coastal Port-en-Bessin, seizing it as a harbor and outlet for an underwater fuel pipeline from offshore tankers; and **2.** connect with Americans from neighboring Omaha beach.

Outcomes: Rough seas delayed arrival of swimming Sherman DD tanks, which had to be delivered by LCAs (landing craft, assault). Once ashore, tanks speeded infantry progress. The 50th achieved its objectives, reaching Bayeux's edge by day's end. No. 47 ran into heavy opposition, and had to dig in a mile from Port-en-Bessin. The occupied harbor town fell on June 8.

Casualties: Allied, 400 killed, wounded, captured, or missing; German, unknown.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Juno Beach

Invasion Force: 21,400 men. 3rd Canadian Infantry Division with attached 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade, and British No. 48 (Royal Marine) Commando and No. 46 (Royal Marine) Commando (both from 4th Special Service Brigade).

Opposition: German 716th Infantry Division and 21st Panzer Division

First Wave on Beach: 7:45 A.M. western sector; 7:55 A.M. in eastern sector.

Missions: 3rd Canadian Division was to **1.** establish a beachhead; **2.** connect with British forces on Gold beach; and **3.** push inland to capture Carpiquet Airfield and take the Caen–Bayeux railroad. No. 48 (RM) Commando was to **1.** land on Juno's east (left) sector; **2.** advance to Langrune-sur-Mer and eliminate a fortified battery there; and **3.** connect with British forces on neighboring Sword beach. No. 46 (RM) Commando was to **1.** land on the far east (left) of Juno; **2.** scale cliffs along the Orne River estuary's east side; and **3.** destroy a cliff top battery there.

Outcomes: A tall, heavily fortified seawall and numerous artillery and machine-gun positions made casualties of half the 3rd Division's first wave. Helped by tanks, the division passed the seawall in about an hour. The entire division was ashore by noon. Pushing inland, the division made progress, but did not reach the railroad. Contact with forces from Sword came on June 7. No. 48 lost half its men before exiting the beach, drowned when two landing craft sank or felled by enemy fire. No. 48 reached Langrune-sur-Mer, but was unable to overcome the heavily fortified and defended battery. Digging in as German tanks approached, No. 48

Above: A British tank crew motors toward shore aboard a Sherman DD (Duplex Drive) swimming tank. The DD tank—one of Hobart's Funnies, sometimes jokingly dubbed the Donald Duck tank—had a retractable flotation screen (seen extended here). A boat screw turned by the tank's engine propelled the vehicle through the water. Opposite, top: Troops of No. 47 (Royal Marine) Commando land on the British 50th Infantry Division's Gold beach on D-Day. They are in for a hard fight outside the harbor town of Port-en-Bessin.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

held on. The commandos captured the battery on June 8, helped by British tanks. No. 46 (RM) Commando was held in reserve offshore because the Orne River battery's activity was minimal. The unit landed on June 7.

Casualties: Allied, 980 killed, wounded, or captured; German, unknown.

Sword Beach

Invasion Force: 28,845 men. British 3rd Infantry Division with attached 27th Armoured Brigade; 1st Special Service Brigade (including two French troops); and No. 41 (Royal Marine) Commando (from 4th Special Service Brigade). Also integrated were specialized tanks of 79th Armoured Division.

Opposition: German 716th Infantry Division and 21st Panzer Division

First Wave on Beach: 7:25 A.M.

Missions: The 3rd Infantry Division with its attached forces was to **1.** move inland toward Caen; **2.** relieve British 6th Airborne troops holding the Orne River and Caen Canal bridges; **3.** seize high ground north of Caen; and **4.** capture Caen if practicable.

Outcomes: Lightly opposed, the 3rd Division and its attached forces moved inland within an hour of landing. Commandos linked with the 6th Airborne, but the 3rd was unable to connect with Canadians from Juno on Sword's west (right). A 21st Panzer Division counterattack around 4 P.M. was broken up that evening. The German 716th Infantry Division was virtually annihilated. Caen remained in German hands until July.

Casualties: Allied, at least 683 killed, wounded, missing, or captured; German, unknown.

THE 79TH ARMOURED DIVISION was present on all three beaches with its customized "Hobart's Funnies" tanks (see sidebar on page 24), laying down mats over problem terrain, filling trenches with stick bundles, detonating mine fields, moving obstacles, and bringing heavy firepower to bear on enemy positions.

Not all British and Canadian forces arrived by sea. Major-General Richard N. Gale's 6th Airborne Division (all Brits except a Canadian battalion) dropped down on the far left (east) of the Allied assault, starting just after midnight, ahead of the amphibious invasion. Some of the paras jumped, others arrived by glider, and like their US counterparts, they came in widely scattered by navigational errors and poor visibility. Their mission—Operation Tonga—was to **1.** seize two German held bridges over the Orne River and the Caen Canal (for troops exiting Sword beach later); **2.** to protect the Allied left by destroying other bridges and securing villages; **3.** to take out an enemy battery at Merville; and **4.** to hold their area of operation. In fast, sharp combat, the 6th achieved all this, losing 800 of its approximately 8,500.

In addition to ground and airborne forces, there were countless British and Canadian naval ships and landing craft, and bombardment and fighter squadrons from the British and Canadian air forces, incorporating men and squadrons of other nations. ★

REMEMBERING

D-DAY

CHAPTER FOUR

'Nothing Less Than Full Victory'

There was no going back. The only way off the deadly beaches was up and out, into France and toward the enemy—all the way to Germany.

by Eric Ethier

Intelligencer Journal

ALLIES INVADE FRANCE

Great Aerial And Sea Armadas Support Operations From LaHavre To Cherbourg

ENGLAND

THE NEWS HAD ALREADY BEEN ALL OVER THE RADIO ALL OVER THE WORLD. Consequently, few newspaper readers were surprised by screaming headlines like the one the *New York Times* ran on June 6, 1944: "Allied armies land in France in the Havre-Cherbourg area; great invasion is underway." By then, French exiles were singing "La Marseillaise" on the streets of New York City and gathering to celebrate in cafés. "I wondered if I should go to church," said one Frenchman in a canteen. "But I am too happy. I said a prayer here by myself and then we ordered beer."

The mood on the Allied beachhead was considerably more subdued. Over the broken Normandy coast, June 7 dawned gray and miserable, a lingering reminder of the previous day's carnage. On the beaches, bluffs, and choppy ground of the Allies' beachhead lay the wreckage of a titanic collision: charred hulks of Sherman tanks, empty Higgins boats hung up on offshore obstacles, and lifeless bodies drifting to and fro in shifting surf. Wisps of smoke and stench wafted from pulverized German casemates and massive bomb craters.

The assault had cost the Allies perhaps 10,000 casualties, including an estimated 2,500 dead, 1,465 of them Americans. (A recent study counted some 4,400 dead, including 2,500 Americans.) Projections of German losses ranged from 4,000 to 9,000. But after just one day of hard fighting, Hitler's much-ballyhooed Atlantic Wall had crumbled like stale bread.

Still, the Allied grip on northwest Europe was tenuous. The British beachhead was ballooning, and Americans had pushed five miles inland from Utah beach. But on Omaha beach, where the

TOP: AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

ALL PHOTOS: THIS STORY (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED) NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Previous spread: It was clear the Allies had come to stay. On Omaha on June 7 or 8 (the Mulberry, set up on the 9th, is not yet visible) the beachhead teems with activity, keeping the invading army fueled, equipped, armed, and fed. LSTs yawn open on the shore. Top: The news had already reached the States, too. *Intelligencer Journal* readers in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, awoke to a banner headline on D-Day morning. Above: In Normandy, dead soldiers and broken machinery littered the beaches. *Cannon Ball 2*, an M4 Sherman tank wearing deep wading gear (tall extension trunks for air intake and exhaust) never made it off Utah. Opposite: All the while, more men kept arriving. This GI, stepping onto Omaha late on D-Day, has arrived soaking wet and with his flotation belt inflated, after wading (and perhaps swimming) ashore from a landing craft.

RANGERS AT THEIR BEST

by Jim Kushlan

NORMANDY'S COASTLINE WASN'T A BEACH. It was a wall—Adolf Hitler's Atlantic Wall, a fortified line bristling with artillery and machine guns. In that wall, an artillery battery atop a seaside cliff named Pointe du Hoc pointed directly at Omaha beach, where many Americans would come ashore on D-Day. Because of that, a band of US Army Rangers had to do the impossible: climb the steep cliff early on D-Day, overcome enemy resistance on top, and disable the powerful guns there.

The job fell to Companies D, E, and F of Lieutenant Colonel James Rudder's 2nd Ranger Battalion. Rudder would personally lead the 225 man mission, which was scheduled to land at the foot of Pointe du Hoc at 6:30 A.M. in 10 British LCAs (Landing Craft, Assault).

The Rangers were well equipped for their climb. Rocket mounts on their LCAs enabled them to fire grapnel-ended climbing ropes to the top of Pointe du Hoc. There were three kinds of ropes: plain, rope ladders, and ropes with evenly spaced wooden toggles. The LCAs also hauled tubular steel ladders, assembled in 16 foot segments that could be combined to a total height of 112 feet.

Four DUKWs (amphibious trucks) mounting 100 foot extension ladders from the London Fire Brigade would follow to provide another means of ascent, if necessary. (Actual attempts to deploy these ladders at Pointe du Hoc would prove unhelpful.)

After Allied planes and ships bombarded the Pointe, the LCAs and DUKWs set out from two LSIs (Landing Ships, Infantry). Seas were rough, and the Rangers bailed water from their boats with their helmets. A DUKW and an LCA were lost (though the swamped LCA's Rangers were rescued and continued on).

The assault was on schedule until a piloting error sent the column off course. Two Allied destroyers, HMS *Talybont (L 18)* and USS *Satterlee (DD-626)* provided covering fire while the error was corrected. But the mistake cost precious time. Rudder's men arrived at Pointe du Hoc at 7:10 A.M., 40 minutes late, and with the full attention of German batteries and machine gun nests, which poured flanking fire on them.

Landing was rough. Some boats couldn't get close enough to shore, so men waded or swam in. Men disappeared suddenly into underwater bomb craters. Nevertheless, the Rangers (and a photographer from the army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*) all reached shore.

More trouble came from above. Germans rained down grenades and gunfire, wounding some Rangers, until the Americans reached safety closer to the cliff base. Debris from earlier bombing provided shelter from flanking fire. Some Rangers drove back the cliff top Germans with rifle fire while their comrades came ashore, and *Satterlee* temporarily resumed her bombardment.

As each Ranger boat landed, the men fired their climbing ropes to the cliff top with their LCA's rocket mounts. Some crews unloaded the rockets and fired them from the beach. Still others used hand-fired rockets. Most groups got ropes in place, but some had to use their ladders. Within about 10 minutes, Rangers were atop the cliff.

Rudder set up his command post near the cliff base, and wounded were brought there for help from medics. Once Rudder's men were atop Pointe du Hoc, they were supposed to use flares to summon the 2nd Ranger Battalion's Companies A and B, along with the entire 5th Ranger Battalion. But time had passed, and these follow-up units had gone ashore on Omaha beach instead.

Atop the Pointe, Ranger crews worked independently to fulfill the mission's objectives: first, to take out the enemy artillery; second, to secure the area by eliminating an enemy observation post, neutralizing a machine gun nest, and holding Pointe du Hoc; and last, to move inland and cut the coastal highway between Vierville and Grandcamp. Picking their way through bomb craters, the Rangers soon realized the German 155mm guns were gone. The emplacements had been demolished by Allied bombs, but the guns had been removed.

Enemy opposition was sporadic but dangerous. A Ranger was killed at the observation post. Machine guns on a cliff

PATCH COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION

Above: The Rangers were the US Army's commando force. On D-Day, three companies of the 2nd Ranger Battalion scaled 100-foot Pointe du Hoc, a cliff slicing into the sea between Omaha and Utah. The purpose? To destroy a menacing German battery. Opposite, left: Leading the assault was 2nd Battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel James Earl Rudder. Opposite, right: After completing their mission, Rangers demonstrate the portable ladders, climbing ropes, and toggle ropes they used to ascend the point.

west of the Pointe sprayed the Rangers, and persistent German artillery from somewhere inland dogged the Americans, inflicting casualties. There were also land mines, though most had been detonated by bombardment. Amid piecemeal fighting, 10 Rangers went missing, seemingly captured; their weapons were found on the ground.

With most of his men atop Pointe du Hoc, Rudder moved his command post up. By then, Rangers were moving through a ruined farmstead toward the highway. Enemy artillery fire still followed them, now joined by shells from US destroyers offshore. To reach the road, Rangers crossed a field raked by German machine guns, running across in small groups, covering one another, and jumping into an abandoned trench. One Ranger died when he landed on a comrade's fixed bayonet.

SUDDENLY, UNIDENTIFIED FRIENDLY FIRE took out the German machine-gunners, and 35 Rangers advanced to the highway, setting up a roadblock by 8:15 A.M. About 45 minutes later, a Ranger made a startling discovery. Beside the road, camouflaged, were five of Pointe du Hoc's six 155mm guns! They were trained on Utah beach, but could also be aimed at Omaha beach. The ammunition was at the ready. The Rangers destroyed the guns with thermite grenades, threw more grenades into the powder charges, and set everything on fire.

Mission accomplished. Now the Rangers waited for the 116th Infantry Regiment and the 6th Ranger Battalion to arrive. While they waited, they held Pointe du Hoc and the area along the highway against periodic counterattacks, and sought shelter from Allied naval shelling. Late on June 6, a Ranger patrol from Omaha reached them. On June 7, a Ranger platoon arrived by LST (Landing Ship, Tank) to evacuate the wounded. Finally, on the evening of June 8, the 116th Infantry arrived.

Rudder had lost 135 Rangers killed or wounded. Of 225 men, 90 were still combat capable on June 8. But destroying the German guns had prevented a bloodbath on the beaches below, and cutting the highway had kept enemy reinforcements at bay. ☆

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29th Division had come in to augment the 1st, things were different. The loss of tons of ammunition, artillery, bulldozers, and other equipment to the heavy seas was slowing progress. Tired GIs there were still dodging German shells and rooting out defenders along a stretch of coast just one mile deep. A timely German thrust here might spell disaster.

EQUALLY WORRISOME WAS THE WIDE GAP between Utah and Omaha, where three companies of the 2nd Battalion, US Rangers, had staked out a claim. On the morning of D-Day, they had gone after a dominating German casemate atop Pointe du Hoc, a 100-foot rock cluster that jutted into the English Channel between the American beaches. Hauling themselves up the rock face with grappling hooks, they fought their way into the concrete fortification only to find it completely empty. But in a field a mile away, they found five monstrous 155mm guns hidden among trees and hedgerows, all aimed at Utah beach. Taking them out cost heavy casualties in a nasty clash with a battalion from the German 914th Infantry. Then the Rangers had to hang on through another day of hard fighting while awaiting support from Omaha.

For the Allies, the next step was to organize, link, and expand operations on the beaches—and then extend their reach inland before the German command had time to regroup, counterattack, and knock them back into the sea. (Hitler, meanwhile, remained

convinced that the main Allied blow had yet to fall.) Broader campaign plans hinged on the city of Caen, about 8 miles inland from Sword beach, which had been scheduled to fall on D-Day. In a scheme dubbed Operation Cobra, while British forces drew German attention at Caen, the Americans would cut off the Cotentin Peninsula, the stub of land extending into the English Channel west of the landing beaches. The US troops would take Cherbourg on the peninsula's tip, then pivot around the German left and break out into the French heartland. All the while, eager French resistance groups would wreak havoc on German communications and transportation, while a persistent Allied horde of 12,000 planes rained bombs on the Germans. Plans called for the capture

Opposite: Things were happening fast. By June 11, the Omaha beachhead had an airstrip for planes like this P-38 Lightning fighter (wearing invasion stripes). The DUKW driving by carries navy beach battalion men. Top: Until a French port was liberated, Normandy's beaches would remain high-traffic zones, and the navy would keep them organized. The navy men at this command post stand by to communicate with a blinker light, loudspeaker, and radio. An electrical generator is visible on the left. Above: Next to a first aid post on Utah beach, navy men of the 2nd Beach Battalion explore German technology by taking apart captured Beetle tanks—Goliath remote-control tracked mines—to see how they work.

DICK WINTERS JUMPS IN

Pulling off his chute in midnight darkness, alone and nearly weaponless in enemy territory, Lieutenant Dick Winters set off to find his men and salvage the day.

by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed

THE LEGENDARY *Major Richard "Dick" Winters, most famous for his role as commander of Easy Company in the 2nd Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division's 506th Parachute Infantry, was just a lieutenant and a platoon officer on June 6, 1944. What's more, he was an untested lieutenant who had not yet experienced combat. But from the moment his boots hit the ground outside Saint-Mère-Église in the earliest moments of D-Day, he showed the resourcefulness, flexibility, responsibility, and sound management that would become his calling card. By the day's end, he would be a company commander—and a grateful survivor.*

As the invasion of Normandy approached, Winters tirelessly prepared his platoon for combat. The months of training took a toll on him. Still only 26 years old, Winters felt that the simpler times of his college years, and the days of civilian life when he did as he pleased, were long past. In a letter to a female friend, he noted that he had grown old beyond his years, "not old physically, but hardened to the point where I can make the rest of [my soldiers] look like undeveloped high school boys. Old to the extent where I can keep going after my men fall over and go to sleep from exhaustion, and I can keep going like a mother who works on after her sick and exhausted child has fallen asleep." Winters went on to say that he hoped all his efforts would mean more of his men would return home to the States than otherwise might have made it back to their families and friends

On the evening of June 5, 1944, Winters climbed aboard a C-47 Dakota aircraft and departed for Normandy for June 6 D-Day operations. Shortly after midnight, Winters jumped with his stick of paratroopers amid intense anti-aircraft fire, from a plane traveling too fast and too low to the ground. The blast of air from the propeller ripped away the supplies bag strapped to his leg as he descended to earth. When he landed outside Sainte-Mère-Église, the only weapon he still had was a trench knife that he had stuck in his boot. "Alone and defenseless in enemy-occupied France," he recalled, "I stuck the knife in the ground before I went to work on my chute. This was a hell of a way to begin a war."

The mission of the 506th's 2nd Battalion, in which Easy Company served, was to seize one of the four causeways exiting the Normandy landing's Utah Beach. The company had been widely scattered in the dark, chaotic jump. But rallying a couple of troopers, Winters set out for the Norman village of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont behind causeway No. 2. En route he joined another battalion and collected roughly 10 members of Easy Company. Unbeknownst to Winters, Lieutenant Meehan, Easy Company's commanding officer, had been killed together with every member of the company's command team when anti-aircraft fire struck his aircraft.

Reaching his destination shortly after daybreak, Winters reported to battalion headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Strayer, the battalion commander, ordered Winters to take his men and destroy a four-gun German 105mm battery outside Brecourt Manor, a farmhouse that stood a scant half mile from Sainte-Marie-du-Mont. By this time the American amphibious forces were landing on Utah Beach and the battery was firing on them. Silencing it was imperative if the seaborne assault was to succeed. Winters would have but 12 men for the task.

Conducting a hasty reconnaissance, Winters issued orders for the assault, which would consist of him and another officer leading the main charge while other Easy Company troopers provided supporting fire. In Winters's words, the keys to this "high risk assault" were "initiative, an immedi

LEFT & OPPOSITE: US ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

Opposite: A D-Day jump into Normandy with the 506th Parachute Infantry's Easy Company launched Lieutenant Dick Winters's journey through some of western Europe's hardest WWII combat. Here, in October 1944, he stands in the gateway of a Dutch estate. Above: Easy Company loads up for Bastogne, Belgium, in December 1944. By then Winters commanded the battalion in which the company served.

ate appraisal of the situation, the use of terrain to get into the connecting trench, and taking one gun at a time." Less than three hours after Winters received his initial orders, the battery was silenced, and the 50 enemy artillerymen there were either killed, wounded, or missing. With the loss of 2 men, Winters and his paratroopers had killed 15 Germans, wounded many more, taken 12 prisoners, and knocked out four artillery guns. It was a textbook operation that would still be studied at West Point 50 years later.

Winters always regarded the attack at Brecourt Manor as one of the highlights of his tenure in company command. Correspondent Ernie Pyle wrote that the "first pioneering days of anything are always the best days." Though Winters would experience many harrowing battles in the future, Brecourt remained special to him because it was his first battle, and he measured up to his personal standard of leadership and to the expectations of his soldiers. The successful assault validated the months of preparation and training that Easy Company had gone through.

That night Winters reflected on D-Day and his very small part in its overall success. Before he dozed off, he knelt down on his knees and thanked God for allowing him to survive that horrible day. He resolved to live the war one day at a time. And he promised himself that if he survived, he would find a small farm somewhere in southern Pennsylvania and spend the remainder of his life in quiet and peace. ☆

This article was excerpted from a longer piece in the June 2011 issue of America in WWII. COLONEL COLE C. KINGSEED, *US Army (Retired), is the co-author of the 2006* New York Times *bestseller* Beyond Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters.

of Paris and the end of Overlord within about 90 days.

Additional impetus for hurrying inland came from Germany's development of fearsome new weapons such as the terrifying V-1 (and soon the V-2) rocket, the first of which would strike London on June 12. Had Germany managed to produce the rockets a few months earlier, Eisenhower later wrote, "Overlord might have been written off." Jet powered fighters were in the works, too; the most difficult and complicated operation that has ever taken place." The Allies' initial success inspired some premature bragging, especially with General Mark Clark's US Fifth Army having just captured Italy's eternal city on June 4. "To lose Rome on one day and to be smashed at the next with the greatest array of power ever concentrated on a target made it Doomsday indeed for the Germans," one columnist wrote. From the safety of their Stateside offices, ebul-

Above: Omaha's beachhead became a full-fledged port after an artificial harbor, or Mulberry, was assembled. Here, a causeway links a concrete pier to shore. A mid-June storm destroyed Omaha's Mulberry, but a British one survived. Opposite: The Allies had opened a new front in the war against the Axis powers, challenging Hitler's hold on Europe. But the success had come at a cost, as this memorial to a killed GI testified.

Messerschmitt Me 262 was just weeks away from being ready to threaten propeller-driven Allied fighters over Europe. And at Peenemünde, along Germany's Baltic coast, scientists were rumored to be working on an atomic bomb.

TO BUILD UP MUSCLE BEHIND the coming thrust, the Allied logistics engine was already hard at work. On D-Day, more than 150,000 Allied troops, including roughly 73,000 Americans, had tramped onto French soil. Within five days, that number would more than double. Service crews would unload 54,000 vehicles and 104,000 tons of supplies. Much more of everything would soon start pouring in through the two Mulberry artificial harbors under construction. The loss of one of these Mulberries—the American one at Saint Laurent-sur-Mer—in a June 19–21 gale would increase the importance of Cherbourg.

Winston Churchill would later say Operation Overlord was "the

lient editors of the *New Republic* went further: "The humorless fanatics with blazing eyes who goose stepped so triumphantly across Europe winning victories against enemies one-tenth as strong as themselves offer a different picture when they fall back ignominiously before a foe who meets them on substantially even terms."

Tough talk aside, Eisenhower and company still faced six weeks of gut-churning fighting through bewildering hedgerows and quaint French towns. Only with Operation Cobra in July and the release of fast-moving, mechanized forces like General George S. Patton's new Third Army would the Allies step broadly from their coastal turf. For now, however, Joseph Stalin had his long desired second front—and Adolf Hitler had his unwanted third. ★

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REMEMBERING
D-DAY
THEATER OF WAR

The Longest Day

A 1962 film classic packed with star power tells a memorable story of D-Day, even if it does occasionally prioritize story over fact.

by Tom Huntington

LIKE THE BATTLE THAT INSPIRED IT, *The Longest Day* was a huge gamble and people worried it would be an epic failure. Well, it *was* an *epic*, but a successful one, especially for producer Darryl F. Zanuck. ¶Cigar-chomping Zanuck headed production at Twentieth Century–Fox until 1956, then left to become an independent producer. On his own, he produced a string of flops, but he believed Cornelius Ryan's bestselling book about D-Day offered him a route back to the top.

Zanuck purchased the rights to the book and hired Ryan to write the screenplay, but the producer-writer relationship soured as Zanuck dramatized the story at the expense of history. "Anything changed was an asset to the film," he later asserted. "There is nothing duller on screen than being accurate but not dramatic."

To push Ryan's buttons, Zanuck told him Mickey Rooney would play Brigadier General James Gavin (the part went to Robert Ryan). The diminutive Rooney was one of the few stars who did not appear in the movie. The cast included some of Hollywood's biggest names, plus a future James Bond (Sean Connery) and two future Bond villains (Curt Jurgens and Gert Frobe).

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

Darryl F. Zanuck's 1962 classic *The Longest Day* tells the D-Day story with a star-studded cast. Above, left: John Wayne portrays Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort, commander of the 505th Parachute Infantry's 2nd Battalion, who led his men at Sainte-Mère-Église on D-Day. Above, right: Sean Connery plays British Private Flanagan. Opposite, top: Henry Fonda takes up a cane as gutsy Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.

Zanuck gathered men and equipment to make the battle scenes appear realistic. He found two Spitfires in Belgium, but Rolls-Royce had to make new engines for them, and the factory that had manufactured Britain's Horsa gliders had to build new ones for the movie. Landing craft were also in short supply. "I believe I had a tougher job than Ike had on D-Day," Zanuck said. "At least he had the equipment." Britain, France, and the United States provided troops for the landing scenes. Zanuck hired several directors to work on separate parts of the movie, even directing scenes himself. He shot much of the film on location, including the Normandy beaches (albeit in winter, not June), and in the town of Sainte-Mère-Église.

THE LONGEST DAY

Directed by Ken Annakin, Andrew Marton, and Bernhard Wicki, written by Cornelius Ryan, based on his book, starring John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, Henry Fonda, Red Buttons, Richard Burton, Eddie Albert, Sean Connery, and Peter Lawford, 1962, 180 minutes, black and white, not rated.

The story sticks to the overall facts of D-Day. As a storm threatens another postponement of the Allied attack, the men who will lead it wait and fret. Among them are Brigadier General Norman Cota (Robert Mitchum), Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. (Henry Fonda), and Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort (John Wayne) and his paratroopers. When word comes down from Eisenhower (played by look-alike Henry Grace) that the attack is on, the fighting men jump into action—literally, in the case of the paratroopers, who leap from planes over darkened Normandy. One of them is Private John Steele (Red Buttons), who ends up dangling from a steeple in Sainte-Mère-Église, watching helplessly as German troops kill his comrades below.

Meanwhile, the German commanders respond clumsily to the invasion, convinced the real attack will come near Calais. Still, they manage to bottle up the Americans on Omaha Beach until a plucky sergeant (Jeffrey Hunter) and his men blow up a concrete abutment and allow the Americans to stream inland (a non-historical Zanuck addition).

Saving Private Ryan trumps *The Longest Day* for its brutal realism, but Zanuck's movie stands up, even in this age of computer-generated imagery. The black-and-white cinematography adds to the gritty feel.

Filmed for a then-astronomical $8 million (plus some of Zanuck's own money), *The Longest Day* became a huge hit. Twentieth Century-Fox, meanwhile, was being buffeted by business crises, including the runaway expense of *Cleopatra*. Even as he prepared *The Longest Day* for release, Zanuck maneuvered himself back into command at the studio. No wonder some people dubbed his movie "Z-Day." ★

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REMEMBERING

D-DAY

SACRIFICES

Hardest Hit

No American town felt the human cost of D-Day more than Bedford, Virginia. Here is one Bedford family's story.

by Lucille Hoback Boggess

In the weeks following D-Day, we heard reports of fierce fighting as the Allies moved deeper into France. What we did not hear was any news about the Bedford company [Company A, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division] or from [my brothers] Bedford and Raymond. We were concerned, and as the days passed, our concern became fear, and fear, finally, a nightmare. One Sunday in mid-July everyone was getting dressed to go across the road to church. An unexpected knock came through the door, and my father opened it to the sheriff. Looking pained and mumbling a few words to Dad, the sheriff handed him a piece of paper—a telegram. "The War Department regrets to inform you," it began, "that your son, Pvt. Bedford Turner Hoback has been killed in action." The news that everyone in town had been expecting, had been dreading, was finally here. It was here—in our house. Our house. We were stunned. Scarcely comprehending the loss but painfully aware of my parents' grief, I watched my mother's tears begin, and my own followed.

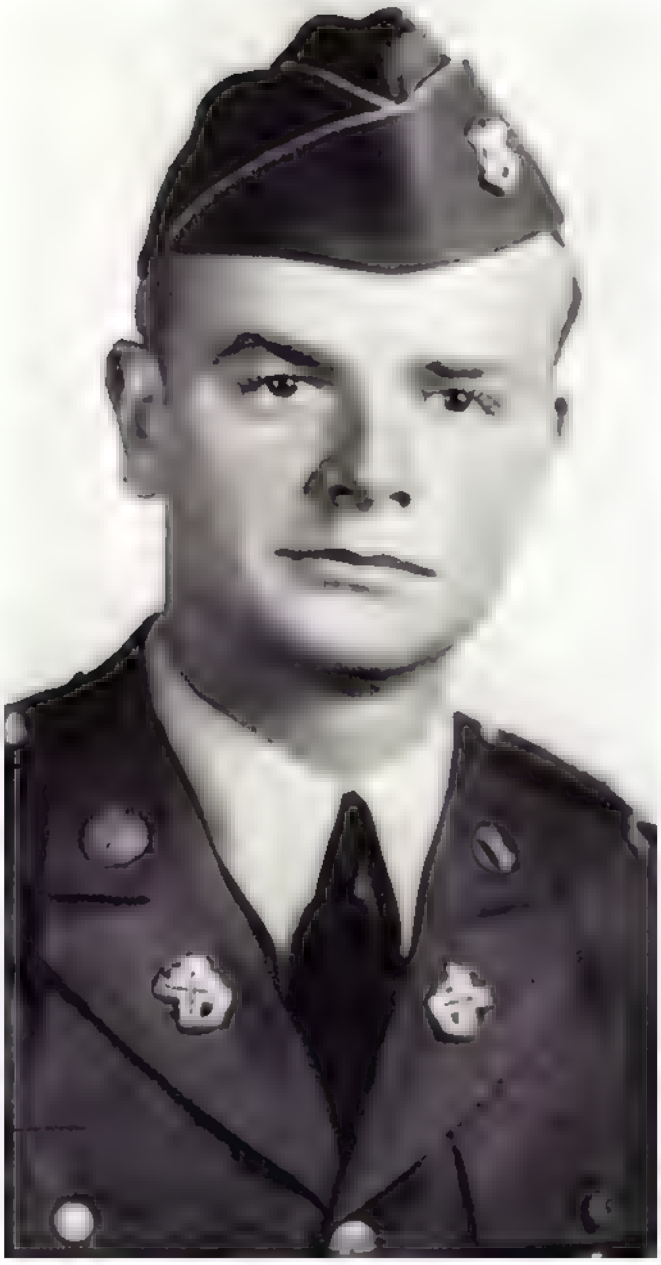
We were not alone in our watch for news, so it took the Center Point congregation no time to figure out what had happened. As I said earlier, we were a visible and regular presence in church. When services were ready to begin and we still had not arrived, people knew where we were—and why. As one, the congregation crossed the road to offer consolation and, in retrospect, I believe, prepare themselves for the worst. You see, there were still thirty-four Bedford boys that had not been heard from.

When the company left town in 1941, more than a hundred boys left with it, but by June of 1944, as a function of reassignments and such, only thirty five of them remained in the company, which had been brought up to strength with soldiers from all over the country. Bedford had been one of the thirty five. Throughout the rest of that Sunday, telegrams were delivered all around town, and family after family struggled to absorb the blow. The next day, in our childish way, my sister Rachel and I thought we might cheer our folks up by making them some ice cream. We were over the freezer cranking away when there was another knock—another telegram. "The War Department regrets," the too-familiar preamble read, "to inform you that your son, Staff Sgt. Raymond Samuel Hoback is missing in action." Mom and Dad were overcome with grief and I along with them. To this moment I can remember nothing else that happened that day. Time simply stopped.

Inconsolable, my mother wept for days afterwards. Dad, when his own sorrow overwhelmed him, would disappear to the barn, where he could surrender to it out of sight of his other children. Raymond was never found. Several of his company mates subsequently reported seeing him lying on the beach near water's edge, whether wounded or dead they did not know. What is clear is that he, along with dozens others like him, was taken by the tide into the sea. We did not know any of that then. We knew only that he was missing, and that knowledge left us with nothing of Raymond that

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LUCILLE HOBACK BOGGESS AND THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, BEDFORD, VIRGINIA

Above: Bedford Hoback's grave stands among thousands in the American Cemetery at Coleville, France. But to one family from Bedford, Virginia, it and a precious item recovered from Omaha beach are the only links to two beloved sons and brothers. Opposite: Staff Sergeant Raymond Hoback (left) and Private Bedford Hoback (right), both of Company A, 116th Infantry Regiment, were killed on D-Day along with 17 other Bedford men.



was tangible. However cruel, a confirmation of death is tangible.

A word now about Providence, which manifested itself in the form of a package that arrived at our house a few days later. It was a book sent by a soldier from West Virginia, who had landed a day after Raymond had gone ashore. "While walking on the beach on D-Day plus one," he wrote, "...I came upon this Bible, and as most any person would do I picked it up from the sands to keep it from being destroyed." It was the Bible she [Mom] had given Raymond for Christmas in 1938. It was her only tangible connection to her missing son. She treasured it for the rest of her life, as I treasure it today.

During the late forties, repatriation of the remains of war dead buried on foreign soil began on a large scale. Though declared dead, Raymond was never recovered. His name appears on the wall of the American Cemetery at Coleville; our brother Bedford is interred, along with some 10,000 other US servicemen, a few hundred yards from that wall. Given the opportunity to bring Bedford home, my parents chose, and wisely so, to leave him with his brother. ☆

NINETEEN MEN FROM *Bedford, Virginia—all in Company A, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division—died on Normandy's D-Day. Their company was the first unit to hit Omaha beach. With a total population of about 3,200 in 1944, Bedford lost about .5 percent of its population on June 6, a higher proportion of D-Day losses than any other American town experienced. For that reason, the National D-Day Memorial was established at Bedford. It was dedicated on June 6, 2001, by President George W. Bush.*

LUCILLE HOBACK BOGGESS *is director emeritus of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation in Bedford, Virginia, www.dday.org The foundation provided Boggess's account.*

REMEMBERING

D-DAY

IN HIS OWN WORDS

The Real Story

A D-Day paratrooper, made famous by books and a classic film, tells what really happened to him on June 6, 1944.

by Arthur "Dutch" Schultz • edited and introduced by Carol Schultz Vento

MY FATHER'S D DAY STORY IS A FAMOUS ONE. *Actor Richard Beymer played him—82nd Airborne Division paratrooper Arthur "Dutch" Schultz—in the 1962 film classic* The Longest Day. *But the reality of what my father saw, did, and felt on D-Day, as a confused young private from Detroit in his first experience of combat, diverges from Beymer's plucky celluloid version.*

The following is my father's D-Day experience in his own words, which I have edited and adapted from material in the archives of Cornelius Ryan (author of the 1959 book The Longest Day: June 6, 1944, *on which the film was based) and historian Stephen Ambrose, both of whom interviewed my father.*

I ENLISTED IN THE ARMY IN MARCH 1942. After basic training at Camp Wallace, Texas, I was assigned to an anti-aircraft unit protecting the Norfolk Navy Yard. I wanted to be in combat and volunteered for the paratroopers in summer of 1943. I joined the 82nd [Airborne Division] in December 1943 in Belfast, Ireland, eventually being assigned to C Company of the 505 PIR [the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment] at Camp Quorn, England. I was a member of the 82nd Airborne boxing team there and did a minimum of paratrooper field training, focusing instead on boxing training. I won the regimental welterweight boxing championship in early May 1944. Because of that, I almost did not jump on D-Day.

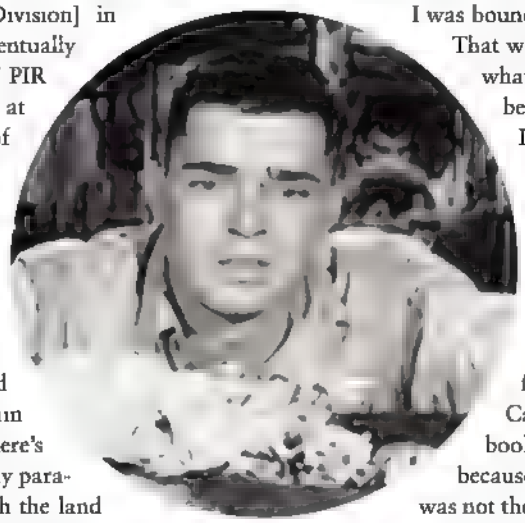
In the middle of May, I was approached by my company commander, Captain Anthony Stefanich, who said, "Dutch, there's a possibility that you can't make the D-Day parachute jump and will have to come in with the landing troops. We're a little short of space on the C-47s. Five in the company are going to come in with the first wave." I didn't respond. I don't know what the look on my face was but he stopped talking in mid-sentence and said, "Well, wait a minute. I'll see what I can do for you." I didn't know whether he was doing me a favor or not. I had no true desire to actually jump on Fortress Europe but nevertheless I did not want to come in by boat. I would've been ashamed if I had to do that. I was a paratrooper and I expected to jump, not come in with landing troops.

Four or five days passed. Captain Stef caught me on the company street and appeared joyful. He said, "Dutch, we made it. You're gonna be able to make the jump." I thanked him. I was assigned to jump with a squad of the mortar platoon of company headquarters. My platoon leader was Lieutenant Jack Tallerday, executive officer of the company.

A few days before D-Day, Dutch was in a crap game . . .

I was involved in a crap game, where I had won $2,500. I was lucky and had broken everyone in the game except for a staff sergeant whom I disliked intensely, and who had about $50 left. I was bound and determined to take all of his money. That was dumb to put my kind of money against what he had left. I didn't know any better, being a novice at this. My luck changed and I lost the $2,500.

I'm one of the characters mentioned in Connie Ryan's *The Longest Day*. He had this crap game taking place at the airfield, which is not actually true. It took place at Camp Quorn, a couple of days before we left to go to Spanhoe Airfield [in Northamptonshire, England]. Ryan felt I was a good Catholic boy and a good Catholic boy shouldn't be betting, so in the book and movie, he had me losing the money because of my religious convictions. That really was not the case. I was trying to humiliate a guy I disliked. I remember after losing this money and giving it some serious thought, I rationalized by saying [I was] convinced [that] had I really won that money, I would have been killed and never would have had an opportunity to spend it. I was convinced



LEFT COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM. OPPOSITE COURTESY OF CAROL SCHULTZ VENTO

Above: In *The Longest Day* (1962), Richard Beymer portrays a Hollywood version of Private Arthur "Dutch" Schultz, a member of C Company, 505th Parachute Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division. Beymer plays Schultz as a brave, even hyperactive, young American everyman. Opposite: On D-Day, the real Schultz (seen in his paratrooper uniform in this cutout standup photo) felt like most paratroopers: scared, lost, and horrified.

A lost Schultz shares a moment's peace with shot-down British Flying Officer David Campbell (Sir Richard Burton) in *The Longest Day*. Over cigarettes, Campbell muses about war, seated near the body of a German he has shot. Campbell's meditations would have been lost on the real Schultz on D-Day; the shock of war was too fresh.

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my chances of surviving D Day were much better because I had nothing left behind.

At the airfield, when we were boarding the planes [on June 5, 1944, the night before D-Day], there was a terrible explosion. A Gammon grenade, which we all carried, accidentally went off and set a plane on fire. Every trooper was killed or injured except two. Those two got on other planes. They both were killed in Normandy. That portended for me some grave danger. I started to experience some honest to goodness anxiety. I remember getting on the plane, taking off, and reaching for my rosary.

It was a very clear night. I have little recollection of what was going on in the plane, because I was totally engrossed in rosaries. I saw a number of old timers sleeping and catching catnaps. Not me, I was praying. It must have been sometime close to 1:00 [A.M.] when we crossed over into France, because after that our plane was taking evasive action. There was a lot of rocking and rolling. I looked out the window and thought I saw sparks coming out of one of the engines. I turned to one of these veterans, and I said, "Look at those sparks coming out of the engines." He looked at me and said, "Sparks, hell. That's flak. That's Ack-Ack." That was my first awareness that things weren't going to be like a practice jump.

Not long after that we were told to stand and hook up. While doing that, we were all knocked to the floor. I don't know whether we were hit by flak or whether one of the maneuvers was sharp. We got back on our feet quickly, again went through the countdown and very quickly jumped.

I WAS ELEVENTH OR TWELFTH OUT of the plane. I remember my chute opening. I oscillated once and came down flat on my back, with no chance to come in with my feet up and roll. At the time, I did not feel any pain. I quickly cut myself out of the chute with my knuckle knife. I started to look around for somebody and found nobody. I was in a little field surrounded by hedgerows. I threw away my gas mask and land mine because I couldn't move with all that heavy stuff. I dashed to the closest hedgerow and wondered what the hell was going on. I thought I heard something. I used my cricket and clicked. In return I got a machine gun burst. I proceeded to bring my M 1 up and point it at the direction where I thought the fire was coming from. I discovered I had failed to load my M 1. Needless to say, I was quick to grab a clip of ammunition and get it in the gun, but by that time there was no point in firing

I kept moving around the hedgerows. I had no idea where I was going. I recall how frightened I was and how totally unprepared I was to be by myself. American navy battlewagons were beginning to bombard Normandy. I could hear these tremendous shells coming overhead sounding like locomotives, huge and thunderous.

I kept walking, looking for somebody. We jumped somewhere around 1:00 and I was by myself until daylight. It wasn't until 6:30 that I ran into my platoon leader and jumpmaster, Lieutenant Jack Tallerday.

During that time I was alone, I can't begin to remember what I was feeling. I know I was frightened. I was never so happy to see anybody as I was to see Jack Tallerday come around a hedgerow. We greeted one another happily. He said, "Come with me." He had been lost too but managed to pick up a bunch of stragglers from other outfits. I didn't know them. There were a couple from

the 101st Airborne and some from the 82nd's 507th or 508th. When we went into Normandy, my 505 Regiment was the only regiment with combat time. The 504 Regiment, our sister regiment, had jumped in Sicily and Italy but didn't make the Normandy jump because they had been fighting in Anzio for a long time. These other stragglers were just as scared as I was and just as unknowledgeable. We had jumped about six to ten kilometers away from our drop zone, about two or three hours from where the fighting was. We heard artillery and mortar fire.

I had the strangest feelings. Remembrances of that walk back to our drop zone. There was the tranquility, the peace on one hand. It's almost like taking a walk in the country on a Sunday afternoon, very peaceful. Normandy is a very beautiful, lush green country; but that tranquility and quietude was shattered by the violence of artillery or mortar fire. Again the peace would come and then the noise, the violence. The peace and the violence.

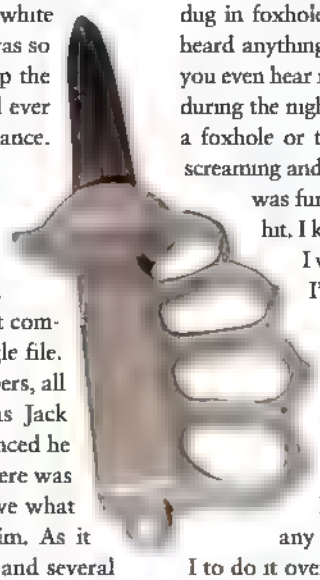
We went on. At one point we had stopped. I remember breaking away from the group when I saw a paratrooper. I started talking to him. He had his M-1 out in front of him. He was lying on his stomach in a prone position and he didn't respond. I knelt down and looked at him and realized he was dead. I saw a bullet hole in the center of his forehead. I didn't see much blood; that was what was so amazing about this. I saw some white fluid on the back of one of his hands. I know that I was so shocked, I got away from there. I couldn't even grasp the significance of this. It was the first dead man that I'd ever seen in my whole life. He looked so alive from a distance. I went back to where the group was.

Then Lieutenant Tallerday told us to "Wait here." He was going ahead to do some reconnoitering and he'd be back in a half an hour. We were sitting down and smoking cigarettes and talking nonsensical stuff.

An hour went by and we began to worry he wasn't coming back. We decided to head down the road in single file. We came upon a number of dead and wounded troopers, all over the road. One of the people I saw there was Jack Tallerday, laying on the side of the road. I was convinced he was dead. I didn't bother to go check him because there was no movement. He was totally white. I couldn't believe what was happening. I made no effort to go over to him. As it turned out, he had been hit, and the original medic and several others that followed overloaded him with morphine. He had all appearances of being dead.

We continued to walk. As we were walking we were coming into more violence, more firepower coming from both the Americans and the Germans. It scattered us to some extent. We got off the road and moved in along the hedgerow and ultimately came to a field, an apple orchard. We were sitting there and the Krauts zeroed in on us with mortars. There were probably 35 or 40 of us paratroopers in this area. We scattered in all four directions because they were really pumping those mortars in.

There was a total lack of organization. Our battalion commander, Major [Frederick] Kellam, had been killed in the morning. Our battalion executive officer, Major [James] McGinty, was also killed. Two or three of the battalion staff officers were killed. Captain Stef had been seriously wounded, our company commander. Tallerday was out of action. All of our platoon leaders were wounded except one. Most of our assistant platoon leaders were wounded. I didn't see any officers or senior NCOs. Most of us that were in this group were in combat for the first time.



OPPOSITE & RIGHT COURTESY OF CAROL SCHULTZ VENTO

Opposite: Dutch Schultz looks over his shoulder from the back left corner of a truck full of C Company paratroopers near Cologne, Germany, in April 1945, near the end of his WWII odyssey. Above: It had all started in Normandy, on the night he dropped from the sky and then cut himself out of his parachute with this knuckle knife.

WE WERE HEADED FOR La Fière Bridge which spanned the Meredet River [as part of the 82nd Airborne's Mission Boston, to secure ground across the Meredet]. This bridge was on the Ste.-Mère Église to Picauville Road, close to Manor La Fière. That was where we were supposed to be. I don't remember being at the bridge on the first day. I do remember an awful lot of gunfire. I remember being exposed to an awful lot of mortars coming from the Germans. I did not see anybody that afternoon that I knew except General [James] Gavin [the 82nd Airborne's assistant commander] in the late afternoon. General Gavin took charge right away. He started gathering us together, newcomers like me.

He proceeded to assign us locations along the railroad tracks. We dug in foxholes and spent the night there. I have never in my life heard anything as eerie as an 88mm artillery shell. They hit before you even hear it. They have this horrible sound as they hit. Sometime during the night, I heard one of these 88s come in and it had struck a foxhole or two because I heard this horrendous screaming and screaming and screaming. It seemed like it lasted eternally. I know it was further down the line. I don't know who it was who got hit. I know that I was alone by then. I didn't know anybody. I was in a hole next to somebody but I didn't know him. I'm not sure that I got any sleep that night. If I did, I don't recollect it.

This baptism of fire was beyond all expectations I had about what war was like. It was a horrible experience. I'm ever, ever so grateful that I had the experience. I feel that I served with some of the bravest and most courageous men of WWII. For that I'm ever so proud. I wasn't prepared for any of this combat. Again, I go back to the fact that had I to do it over again, I "sure as hell" would not have joined that boxing team when I first joined the 505. But be that as it may, that's the way it was.

AS A MEMBER OF *the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Schultz went on to fight in Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands, in the Battle of the Bulge, and in the invasion of Germany. He received the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. He died in October 2005 at the age of 82.* ★

CAROL SCHULTZ VENTO, *a professor and attorney in the Philadelphia area, is the daughter of* ARTHUR "DUTCH" SCHULTZ. *She is the author of numerous articles about WWII history, and the 2011 book* The Hidden Legacy of World War II: A Daughter's Journey of Discovery, *published by Sunbury Press. More information about Schultz is online at www.daughtersofd-day.com, and at Vento's website, www.carolschultzvento.com.*

REMEMBERING

D-DAY

I WAS THERE

In Their Own Words

Six Americans who experienced D-Day firsthand—a tank crewman, a paratrooper, a B-17 navigator, an infantry officer, a GI, and an LTC skipper—tell their stories.

From the archives of *AMERICA IN WWII* magazine

HAMMERED IN *HELLZAPOPPIN'*

I WAS INDUCTED into the army at the age of 21 in December 1942 in Newark, New Jersey, and was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey. Before long we were off to Camp Hood, Texas, where I was assigned to the 747th Tank Battalion.

In England we received our Sherman tanks. I had reached the rank of corporal and was assigned as tank commander. The crew consisted of Privates Sandit, Switka, Peter (the "Greek") Zanis, and me. We drove our tanks down the English roads until we reached our initial station at Plymouth.

We were ordered to name each of our tanks for quick field identification. The first letter of the name had to be the same as our company, which for us was H (for headquarters) Company. There was a play on Broadway called *Hellzapoppin'* and I thought at the time that would be appropriate. My crew agreed, so we stenciled it on both sides of the turret.

An English barge came into the bay, and we loaded four of our

Waiting for D-Day in Plymouth, England, Ted Surowiec (above, left) poses with an M3 submachine gun. On D-Day, before his tank rumbled onto Omaha Beach, he watched the action through binoculars and saw many dead GIs like this one (above, top right), whose comrades have honored him with crossed rifles. The next day, Surowiec lost a leg when his tank was hit, but survived to marry and have a family (above, lower right).

tanks onto it, one on each corner, making it ride low in the water. We sat and waited. On June 4, 1944, we moved into the English Channel. The weather was bad and the water was rough.

At Dover, the invasion fleet came together and I could see hundreds of ships on both sides of us and I remember thinking, "This was going to be easy, a piece of cake." But it sure didn't turn out that way. The navy bombarded the coast of Normandy for what seemed to be hours, firing shells which whistled over our heads continuously. I could not believe anyone could be alive on shore after such a pounding.

The 29th Infantry Division went in with the first wave on Omaha Beach. My unit, the 747th Tank Battalion, was held in reserve. I had a pair of binoculars and could see what was happening on shore. It seemed everything was on fire, tanks, trucks, everything.... I remember seeing the bodies of soldiers, all lined up with their boots sticking straight up, a lot of bodies, our guys, lying all over the beach, and some were still floating in the water. We watched as crews threw grappling hooks into the water to pull out the bodies, but there were still more bodies. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

The next day we picked up an artillery forward observer named Lieutenant Lindsey. Our job was to direct artillery fire. We were near a village called Isigny. This was the dangerous hedgerow country of France. We drove into several orchards and dismounted, keeping as quiet and hidden as we could. I accompanied Lieutenant Lindsey to points where he could fix coordinates on the enemy positions. We called for artillery strikes over the tank radio and within minutes we could hear shells cracking overhead.

Our side was exposed to the enemy when *Hellzapoppin'* got hit. I felt the explosion and the heat as the inside of the tank became engulfed in flames. I realized that I was on fire and knew I had to get out. I pulled myself out of the turret with my arms, and onto the side of the tank and to the ground. Peter Zanis, the only other crewman to escape the flames, pulled me away from the tank and propped me against a tree. I watched for hours as the flames and smoke shot out of the turret, consuming my buddies.

Lieutenant Joseph DeMasi of the 82nd Airborne Division (above, the division's sleeve patch) had jumped in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. On D-Day, he jumped behind Normandy's enemy lines.

ABOVE COURTESY OF THE RAMKAS COLLECTION

The fire had burned my clothes and I was lying there mostly naked with burns all over my body. There was no bleeding or pain, which had to be a blessing at the time, but my left leg was shattered. I knew I was in trouble when I looked at it. There were voices in the distance and I lay there for about three hours, afraid the Germans were going to find me and kill me. I heard rustling in the leaves and played dead, but thank God it was an advancing unit of American GIs. For me the war was over. I was evacuated back to the beach, to the dressing station, where they amputated my left leg just below the hip. The army sent me to Lawson Army Hospital in Chamblee, Georgia, near Atlanta. Over several months I was nursed back to health, eventually being fitted with a wooden left leg. Learning to walk again required long hours of practice, patience and determination. While there, I fell in love with a local girl, Reba Johnson. She had been working in the Bell Aircraft Plant in Marietta, Georgia, helping to build B-29 bombers. She was also volunteering in the hospital to help cheer up the guys. We eventually married and raised a family.

I didn't understand at the time why my life was spared that June day in France, because a lot of America's finest young men never came home from Normandy, including several of my buddies.

Theodore "Ted" Surowiec
wartime corporal, 747th Tank Battalion, Lilburn, Georgia (deceased)
as told to William Copeland and Joseph T. Surowiec

DROPPING FROM THE SKY

AFTER THEY DROPPED [us] paratroopers off around midnight, one, two in the morning, those planes [went] right on back. They got fuel and whatnot, tied onto the gliders and off they went again [bringing jeeps for our reconnaissance mission].

We...were supposed to go a day before the invasion actually took place.... Being that the weather was bad...they held off one day, and it was during that day Eisenhower assembled the officers of the 82nd Airborne in different spots...maybe in battalion groups. He came in and made...a nice speech and said, "This is it, this is it. We've got to succeed...."

We were well aware that they [the Germans] had these poles [known as "Rommel's asparagus"].... You know, the paratroopers would be dropping out of a plane and they would get speared.... Another thing about jumping at night: would you believe that a lot of people got killed by releasing the parachute? You get the feeling that a macadam road is a stream. Sometimes the moon is out and the thing is just so and it takes a good man to say, "Hell, that's no stream. That's a macadam road." Now if it's a stream, you are supposed to smack your stomach and your harness comes right off and you fall right out of your chute. You fall out of your chute and you land on a macadam road and you're finished. Those that land in water, you've got to do that because, with all of the hand grenades you got on you and your ammunition and your gun is strapped to your side, bad enough when you land in water without a chute. With a chute, you don't stand a chance....

We landed about a mile...north of Sainte-Mère-Église.... It was dawn when we landed and we were together, I've got to say, within two hours.... And we were stationed on a road and we kept firing at anything that came down that there road....

Joseph V. Demasi
second lieutenant, Company C, 1st Battalion,
505th Parachute Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, on D-Day,
Phillipsburg, New Jersey (deceased) Rutgers Oral History Archives

LEAD PLANE ON D-DAY

AFTER I HAD FLOWN 10 missions, the 8th Air Force wanted some navigators to train to be radar operators [using Pathfinder radar navigation, which replaced the B-17's ball turret with a revolving antenna]. This training took place at Alconbury, England. Don't know if our crew got this assignment because we

COURTESY OF BARBARA MCALLISTER

Roy Uhlinger (front, second from right) was the "Mickey man"—the B-17 radar navigator in charge of leading the Eighth Air Force through the clouds on D-Day.

were good or because we were goof-offs. At any rate, we got it, and I was the officer who had to learn something new to navigate over the clouds and bomb through the clouds while leading a group, wing, or division. On D Day it turned out we were leading the entire 8th Air Force.

It was not announced before we took off that this was D-Day.... However, we sensed that this was the big day when we took off about 3 A.M., a couple of hours earlier than usual. Thousands of planes had two hours or so to get in formation over England and then bomb the French beaches about 6:30 A.M., just five minutes before our troops were to storm the beaches. A one-way traffic route had been set up for all the planes involved in the invasion. After we bombed around Caen and Saint-Lô, we flew west and around a French island before we turned north, headed for England.

After we reported to intelligence on how things went, we went to bed about 9 A.M. About 3 P.M. we were all called upon to fly a second mission. We flew the second mission of the day, which marked D-Day as the only day that we flew two different missions in the same day.

Roy H. Uhlinger

wartime first lieutenant, Eighth Air Force, 3rd Bombardment Division, 388th Bomb Group, (deceased), as told to his daughter, Barbara McAllister, Hickory Corners, Michigan

THE BIG RED ONE HITS OMAHA

SOME TROOPS HAD GOTTEN ON the beach a half hour, perhaps, [before us].... I would guess it was probably engineers trying to demine the place and cut through what we called "Element C." I don't know where that name came from.... They were like railroad ties that were bound together and sunk in cement, in the sand, so that at any tide, even high tide, your boat would ground on it.... So...the vessel was grounded out too far.

I know some of my men drowned, because...they couldn't get rid of their heavy equipment in time, because we'd been told it's going to be shallow....

Pappy..., who was my second in-command, was killed immediately; a shell had just [landed near him], he was gone, and others, a number of them.... We couldn't get them out of the line of the high tide, and, while they were injured, they died because they drowned....

This was when [Brigadier General] Theodore Roosevelt [Jr.] and...[29th Division assistant commander Brigadier General] Norman D. Cota...came along, and both of them, in their way, exhorted the men, "You're going to die here. You've got to get up the cliff." Well, there was a little shallow place, just a tidal shallow at the base of the cliff, and, beyond that...this was all shale. It wasn't sand...but water came in there at high tide. But, it gave a little shelter at the time we were trying to land, and the point was to get there and then begin going up the cliff.... So, we were getting fire from the right side...for a while.... The Rangers were trying to scale the Pointe du Hoc, and they got it and knocked out the big guns, finally....

We headed for a thing called the "E-1 Draw" on Red Beach, that's a part of Omaha Beach.... And this was an old, just a sort of a farm road.... So, we managed to work our way up...that draw. We'd lost some men by then...probably we had lost about eight by that time, and all the vehicles except one jeep were gone, and all the guns. So, in effect, we were infantrymen. We were on foot. We had no heavy weapons. We just had to use our rifles and went on up, those of us that made it..., to the top, into a wooded lane....

I had apparently been hit by a spent fragment of...probably an artillery piece somewhere along the line, and I reached in, put a handkerchief around my middle left finger, and it was all blood soaked. And going by, there's a temporary sort of a Medical Corps tent...with a red cross in front of it. That was the aid station above the beach, just about where the cemetery is now...and he called out, and he said, "Lieutenant, you're wounded. What's the trouble? You're all bloody." I said, "What? I'm not wounded," and he said, "Look at your finger, look at your hand." I looked down and here is—I still have the memento of a nail that grows crooked all these years. And he said, "Here, let me bandage you up," and I said, "Look, I've got to get in." "No, come on in." So, I went in, he took this wet, bloody handkerchief off and put on a decent bandage...and he turned me loose and said, "Go ahead. Now, you're okay, for now." And then, I went and caught up with my men, who were slowly moving down, watching for snipers....

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An ROTC member, Franklyn Johnson was, he said, already "in the bag" for WWII service. He was a seasoned combat veteran by the time he hit Omaha beach with the 1st Division.

Franklyn A. Johnson

antitank company first lieutenant, 1st Infantry Division, on D-Day, Bonita Springs, Florida (deceased) Rutgers Oral History Archives

NO PLACE FOR THE LIVING

WHEN THE TIME CAME to get off the ship..., [there] was this little plank, and then the landing craft alongside, bouncing up and down.... And you had your pack on and

you had the life raft belt, and we were told about the CO2 cartridge. If need be, then you just press that and [the life belt] would blow up.

And so, then you jumped onto this [landing craft].... And...those things are steel. Boy, I can remember when I jumped, I caught that thing when it was going down, I guess. I hit and "Wow!" I felt like my teeth went through the top of my head.... We had seasick pills, which you never used. But, down below [on] this thing, the diesel smell was terrible. I think that would make you sick. And we were on that thing, they figured it would be about anywhere from a half hour to an hour....

[A coastguardsman on the landing craft] said that we couldn't get in to where we were supposed to get in. And then he finally said "Okay," and "Everybody up!" and we went up. And then you saw all this carnage going on—noise, and the smoke, we saw vehicles burning and everything. And we landed around Saint Laurent....

D-DAY TO ST. LO
29 LET'S GO
This Is To Certify That
Grade
Name
WAS A MEMBER OF THE
29TH INFANTRY DIVISION
ON D-DAY, 6 JUNE 1944, AND SERVED WITH IT CONTINUOUSLY UNTIL THE CAPTURE OF ST. LO ON 18 JULY 1944
C. H. GERHARDT,
MAJOR GENERAL, U. S. ARMY,
COMMANDING

COURTESY OF SERGEANT MAJOR JUSTIN LEHEW, USMC

The 29th Infantry Division issued certificates to men who made it from D-Day's Omaha Beach to Saint-Lô, 40 miles inland. Private 1st Class Arthur F. LeHew of the 175th Infantry earned this one.

And the eerie sight, the first thing that frightened me, was getting off and splashing the water. We were a little deep, and I can remember [there] being a small corporal guy from New Orleans, Caruso. And Caruso was green, blue, purple, all kinds of colors, and he was almost chattering. I said, "What's the matter, Caruso?" ...I said, "Don't worry, we're all scared." "No," he says, "I can't swim." ...So, I said, "Okay, don't worry." I says, "Stick with me, we'll be all right." And, we did, we just landed, just a couple of steps.... And, I just held on to his collar and sorta pulled him in with me till we hit the ground. I said, "All right Caruso, you're on your own."

...But the frightening thing was all the bodies in the water, floating, and they were all grotesque. And...I understand what some of them did was press that cartridge [the carbon dioxide cartridge for inflating the life belt], which had blown up, and the thing turned them over. With the weight and everything...they just drowned....

When we got there...there was all sorts of fire coming from the bluffs and the hills. They had that place zeroed in like mad. But...there was a bulldozer, just abandoned—it was sort of, like, on its side, and a lot of us ran and got behind that thing.... And so, we were behind this bulldozer, afraid to move, and Lieutenant Fredericks was with us. So...he gets out his—this was about one o'clock in the afternoon—and...he gets out his map. And he's looking at coordinates and everything and he said, "We belong way the hell down there." We were...maybe a mile, mile and a half, two—I don't know—from Vierville. And so he said, "Well, we've got to get down there." So, he gets up and he says, "Okay, everybody up." He's going to start to call roll, you know! It was what he was trained to do, I guess, to make sure that everybody's here. So this guy from the engineers looked and he said, "Lieutenant, are you out of your goddamned mind?" He said, "Do you want your guys to be here, with all those guys?" because dead guys were out. He said, "Well, you'd better get them down." He says, "They're shooting at you up there, don't you understand?"

Vincent J. Gorman

soldier, 447th Automatic Weapons Battalion, US Army, on D-Day, Newark, New Jersey (deceased) Rutgers Oral History Archives

AN LCT COMMANDER'S STORY

We landed in Normandy on June 6, 1944, an hour before H hour. I was fortunate in landing my Sherman tanks from the 3rd Armored Division.... We were told on the way in [that] the Seabees cleared all the mines out. And here, these two ships hit mines on either side of me and I just kept going.... I mean, I saw it blow up and I saw the tanks go up in the air and men flying out and we couldn't even stop to pick them up.... We picked up two and we were told to keep on going, get the hell out of there....

We landed where we were supposed to land on Utah Beach.... We tried to get in as close as we could because tanks can't go in too deep water. They did have canvas sides on them. These canvas sides were I guess three or four feet high and they were especially made for that invasion and they...had them up when I landed. But, I was fortunate to get them in pretty close and I guess they landed in about four feet of water....

[After landing the four tanks]...we took another load of personnel, just solid personnel. And I think there was maybe one vehicle, weapons carrier.... Then we took wounded back and we left them off at a hospital ship where the deck was loaded with wounded on stretchers.

Charles W. McDougall

first lieutenant, US Navy Reserve, commander of LCT-592 *on D-Day, Alexandria, Virginia (deceased)* Rutgers Oral History Archives

REMEMBERING

D-DAY

TRAVEL

Back to the Beaches

Reminders of D-Day are still visible along Normandy's shoreline, where the epic struggle of June 6, 1944, has left an indelible mark.

by Joe Razes

IF YOU COULD PUT A DATE ON THE BEGINNING OF THE END for Adolf Hitler's dream of a Nazi-controlled Fortress Europe, it would be June 6, 1944—D-Day. The successful landing of Allied forces on France's Normandy coast that day marked the beginning of the end for Axis Germany.

My visit to Normandy fulfilled a longtime wish to see the coastline and countryside where this pivotal WWII offensive took place. I was overwhelmed. The landing beaches stretch across 63 miles of Normandy's 360-mile coast. And a French tourist brochure covering the battle for Normandy lists 29 museums and points of interest, along with 27 cemeteries.

There is even more to see than the brochure suggests—unusual and worthwhile museums and exhibits all over the coast and inland. At Arromanches, for instance, at high tide you can see offshore remnants of a giant concrete harbor known as a Mulberry—one of two the Allies built after D-Day to help get men and supplies ashore. From an American perspective, however, the iconic, must-see attractions are Utah and Omaha beaches (the two areas where Americans came ashore), the Utah Beach Landing Museum, the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, and Pointe du Hoc.

Visiting Utah and Omaha beaches is made easy by signs and markers that guide the way. Maps and signposts still refer to the invasion beaches by their code names, streets near the beaches are named after units that fought there, and occasional markers commemorate notable incidents. To accommodate the many American, British, and Canadian visitors whose history is remembered here, information is displayed in English as well as French.

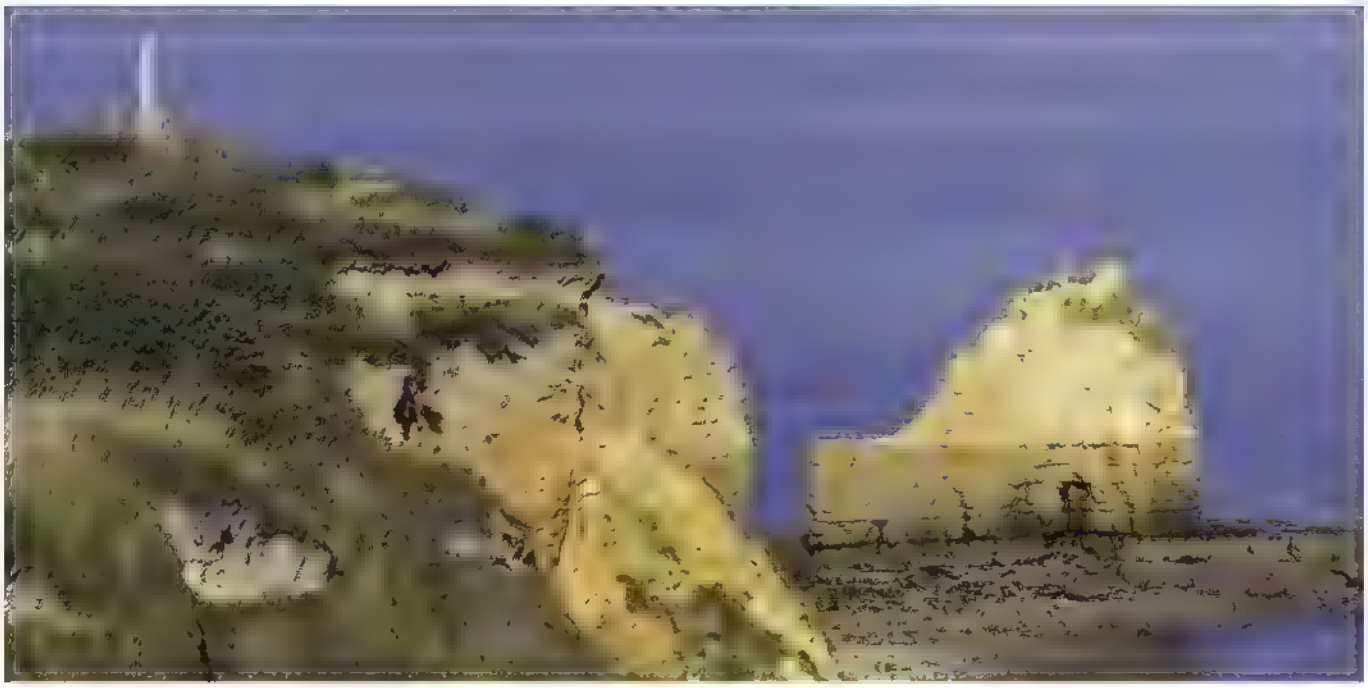
Veterans and history buffs alike should definitely visit the Utah Beach Landing Museum. Built around German blockhouse W5, the museum has long rectangular windows that simulate the view from a German fortification. From the windows you can see rows of hedgehogs—anti-tank defenses made of angled iron—on the beach below. Displays include landing craft used in the D-Day assault, plus archival photographs, maps, and artifacts. Scale models of the German defenses show the Allies' conquest of Utah Beach and the evolution of the front. Museum staff are available to explain the German beach defenses and the different stages of the landing.

Farther east, the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial at Colleville-sur-Mer stands on a cliff overlooking Omaha Beach and the English Channel. The 172.5-acre site was donated to the United States by France. Established by the US First Army two days after D-Day, it was the first American WWII cemetery in Europe. Today it is kept immaculate by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Displays at the cemetery's visitor center, completed in 2007, convey the significance of the largest amphibious and aerial assault the world has ever seen—Operation Overlord, as the Normandy Invasion was codenamed. Visitors enter the center by descending below ground before proceeding to the cemetery. On the ground floor, flags of the 12 Allied nations that participated in the invasion are prominently displayed—a reminder that D-Day wasn't a solely American operation. While US forces stormed Utah and Omaha beaches, British and Canadian forces fought their way ashore on Gold, Sword, and Juno beaches to the east. Allies from nine other nations also participated in the landings.

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY: JOE RAZES

Above: A Rupert paradummy from 1962's film *The Longest Day* seems about to touch down at the D-Day Museum in Arromanches, France. Real Ruperts were cruder, but uniforms, boots, and helmets made them look real. They were dropped near the Pas-de-Calais on D-Day morning to confuse the Germans about the invasion's target. Opposite: German tank traps still stand on Gold beach at Arromanches, where the British 50th Division landed.



A third of the visitor center's 30,000 square feet is dedicated to exhibit space. Personal stories of participants, and a mix of narrative text, photos, films, interactive displays, and artifacts portray the competence, courage, and sacrifice of Allied forces. The contributions of local French resistance forces are recognized here, too. Engaged in behind-the-lines sabotage and combat against the occupying Germans, resistance fighters risked capture, torture, and execution

Just inside the cemetery are the Walls of the Missing, where 1,557 names are inscribed on walls in a semicircular garden. Rosettes mark the names of those since recovered and identified. Walking farther brings visitors to a curved colonnade with an open-air building at each end, containing large maps and narratives of the Normandy military operations.

A 22 foot bronze figure rising from waves, *Spirit of American Youth*, looks past a reflecting pool toward the burial area where 9,387 American military dead lie. Row upon row of precisely placed, identical white Latin crosses and Stars of David, with a circular chapel in the center, create a mood of reverence and awe. Flowers laid on graves here and there recall the loss of life that is still felt by families and loved ones left behind.

Thirty eight pairs of brothers rest here, as do a father and son—Colonel Ollie Reed and 1st Lieutenant Ollie Reed, Jr. Staff members are on duty to answer questions and escort relatives to graves and memorial sites. Moviegoers may recognize that the beginning and end of *Saving Private Ryan* were filmed here.

Walking through the visitor center and

Opposite, top: Atop mighty Pointe du Hoc stands a granite memorial to US Army Rangers who scaled the cliff to take out German guns. Above: Other German gun emplacements—the four casemates of the Longues-sur-Mer battery between Utah and Omaha beaches—look as they did on June 6, 1944. Pockmarks tell of Allied bombardment that failed to neutralize the battery until 7 P.M. on D-Day. Below: Nothing conveys the human cost of D-Day like the rows of grave markers at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial at Colleville-sur-Mer.

cemetery puts the Normandy Invasion in context. Visitors emerge with an appreciation of World War II's human cost and of the importance of honoring our war dead. They also begin to realize what an achievement America and her allies accomplished in carrying out the greatest amphibious invasion in history.

Feelings of respect for the men of D-Day arise again at the massive concrete cliff-top gun emplacement at Pointe du Hoc, just west of Omaha Beach. Huge craters, 30 or more feet across and at least 10 feet deep, pockmark the ground. These were blasted out when Allied warships pounded the position. Several gun emplacements hit by the shelling had huge pieces of concrete weighing many tons torn from them and thrown about. It's hard to conceive that any German forces could have survived such a barrage. But they did.

Peering down the vertical cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, I could appreciate the challenge the US 2nd Ranger Battalion faced in scaling them, weighed down with heavy equipment and weapons, and with German gunfire and hand grenades raining down on them. The bluff overlooking the edge, including the stone monument honoring those Rangers, has been fenced off to protect visitors from the crumbling cliff face.

I could have spent weeks exploring Normandy and its countless sites that tell the story of the Allied invasion of Europe. I'm already planning a return trip to see and learn more about this historic operation that proved to be the turning point of World War II. ★

JOE RAZES *of Denver, Colorado, is a contributing editor of* America in WWII *magazine.*

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REMEMBERING

D-DAY

PARTING SHOT

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

It's easy to tell when someone's a good guy. He drops from the sky and risks his life to help drive away the people who took away your country and your freedom. He's friendly to little kids, and lets them wear his glider infantry cap sometimes. He may not speak your language, but he somehow lets you know everything is going to be OK. Private William L. Hatcher, a glider infantryman from Scranton, South Carolina, seems to have met these basic criteria as he relaxes in the sun with a newfound friend, a French orphan boy in a freshly liberated town in Normandy.

Celebrate the 70th Anniversary of D-Day

AT THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL

June 6 - 8, 2014 - A Weekend of D-Day

On Friday, June 6, 2014 join us for a commemoration ceremony at 11AM. Other activities include veteran's oral history stations, a USO show at 2PM, a reunion tent, and displays by living historians. At dusk join us for a Canteen and an outdoor showing of *Casablanca*.

On Saturday, June 7 at 10AM the community of Bedford will host a 1940s parade. Later that evening is a performance by the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra at the Memorial. Tickets go on sale in May.

70th ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY JUNE 1944 ★ 1944 ★ 2014 ★

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The National D-Day Memorial is operated by the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3).

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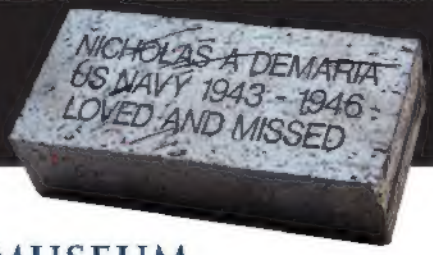

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